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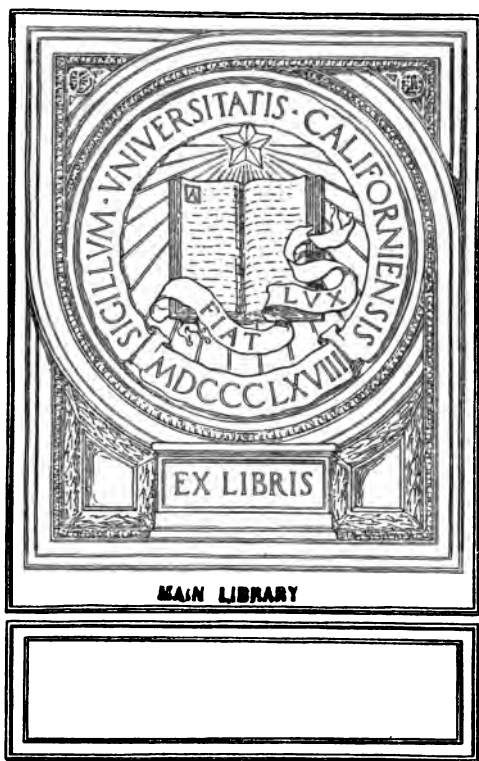
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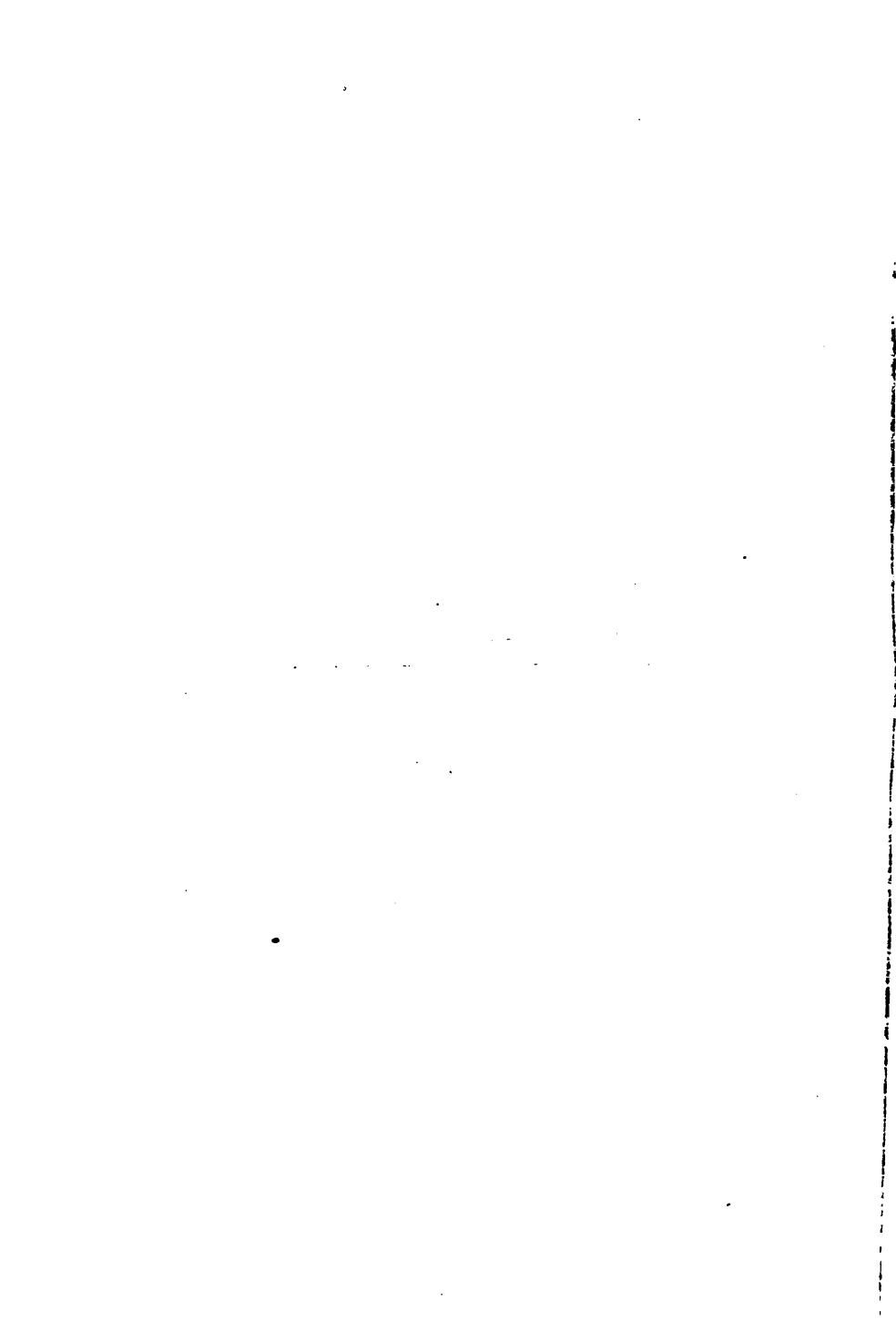
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STRAY SPORT





"The sign-manual of Felis tigris."

STRAY SPORT

BY

J. MORAY BROWN

(LATE 79TH QUEEN'S OWN CAMERON HIGHLANDERS)

AUTHOR OF 'SHIKAR SKETCHES,' 'POWDER, SPUR, AND SPEAR,'

'THE DAYS WHEN WE WENT HOG-HUNTING,' ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I.

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P R E F A C E.

As the title implies, this volume can only aspire to be a collection of sporting incidents, framed from the pages of a diary as fancy seized me; whilst three of the chapters, though they may be termed fiction, are yet founded on fact—viz., those entitled “Poggie’s Mistake,” “A Woman’s Nerve,” and “Specimens of Sportsmen.” The others are all true records of personal experiences; and though they have no pretensions to sensationalism, they will, I trust, prove acceptable to sportsmen who have passed many happy hours by flood and field, and enable them to while away an idle hour by recalling similar scenes in which they themselves have been the principal actors.

Some of these articles have already appeared in the columns of the ‘Field,’ ‘Land and Water,’ the ‘Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News,’

'The Asian,' 'London Society,' and the 'Daily Graphic,' to whose proprietors and editors I must return my best thanks for their courtesy in allowing me to republish them in book form.

I have purposely, and in order to avoid confusion, divided the volume into two parts: the first dealing with shooting and hog-hunting in India, the second with sport at home.

To the artists—Lieut.-Col. Jackson, Mr J. C. Dollman, Mr C. Bradley, Mr G. D. Giles, Miss F. L. Banks, and Mr Frank Feller—who have aided me with their clever pencils, I must tender my grateful thanks for the admirable way in which they have caught the spirit of the various incidents illustrated, feeling sure that any merit attaching to the work will be more due to them than to the author.

In conclusion, I would only say that, with no desire to instruct the practical sportsman, I yet hope the inexperienced may gather a hint or two from these pages, and be able to appreciate, even when engaged in sport, the beauties of Nature's surroundings, and feel thankful that they are permitted to inhale "God's glorious oxygen."

J. MORAY BROWN.

BEDFORD PARK, *July* 1893.

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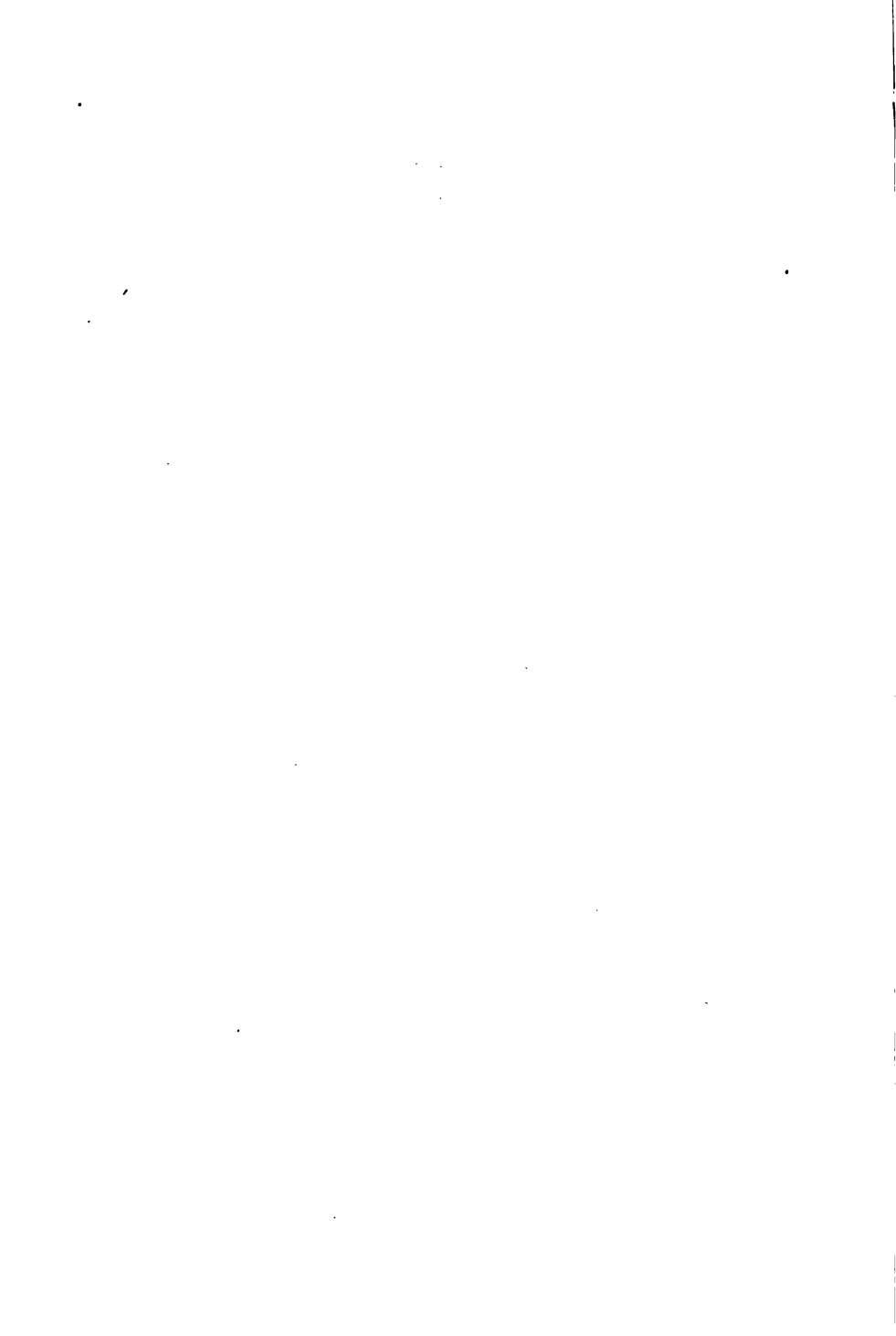
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PART I.

INDIAN SHIKAR



UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

STRAY SPORT.



CHAPTER I.

HÆC OLIM.

AMONGST all the *lares et penates* of a sportsman's den, the fetishes, relics, trophies—call them what you will—few are perhaps more valued by those that have had the wisdom to keep them than Sporting Diaries; few will bring back with more forcible clearness past happy days on mountain and moor, in jungle and on plain, by sea-shore and stream. Pictures of past favourites, equine and canine, antlered heads, foxes' masks, skins, spears, whips, horse-hoofs, and stuffed birds, from the fact of their constantly meeting the eye, lose to a certain extent their interest, and after a time are looked upon almost mechanically by

their owner, without always bringing vividly before him the incidents of the day with which they were connected. When the trophies are many and varied, memory is apt to fail and become confused, and it needs a stronger reminder if we would fain call to mind the locality where they were obtained, the date, and the attendant circumstances. Not so the Sporting Diary. You have only to turn over its pages, and however roughly the notes may have been kept, heigh! *presto!* and as if touched by a magician's wand, the mists that enshroud the past vanish, the curtain of oblivion is torn aside, and once more in spirit you re-enact all the old scenes, and see before you the quarry that it gave you so much enjoyment to circumvent; the whole scene is mapped out, and you see every stick and stone, every tree and inequality of the ground, where the incident took place. Tinged with sadness perhaps such days may be, when we recall cheery comrades who participated in our sport, and who are now scattered or dead; the gallant horse who carried us so well, or the faithful dog who obeyed our slightest behest. Yet, after all, they were very happy days!

“A while we bid them linger near,
And muse in wavering memories
The bitter-sweet of days that were.”

So, my old book, battered and worn though your binding be, and faded the ink-lines that cover your pages, come forth ; let me dip back into the past, tenderly and with reverence, and see what you will tell, for every feature of those scenes is invested with a halo of fond memories.

Speaking conscientiously, the first pages are but records of failure, the result of inexperience, so they must be skimmed. But see ! here is the first success thus recorded : "A good black buck, 20-inch horns." That is all. But what visions it recalls ! A far-stretching sandy plain, a herd of some fifty Indian antelope (*A. cervicapra*), swaggered over by a jet-black buck, who with swelling neck, head thrown back, and tail curled over his back, is trotting about in all the pride of masterly supremacy ; now fascinating some admiring doe with an amorous glance, now warning off with a threatened prod of his graceful spiral horns some "buckeen" who ventures on too familiar terms with the ladies of his hareem. How long we lay and watched him from the scant shelter of a thorn bush, till the herd fed on to more favourable ground, and we crawled and squirmed along until a sinuous nullah brought us within range ! Then the agony of fear lest we should miss and lose those long annulated horns ; the shot ; the flying stotting herd as they scat-

tered right and left; and then, oh joy! the beautiful animal lying dead with an *at last* properly placed bullet through his heart!

More failures to be skimmed; then the scene changes, the arid plain gives place to the rolling hills and bamboo-clothed slopes of the Sewalik hills rifted here and there with gorge and corrie, and bring us into sambhur and chital ground, whilst the entry "A hind sambhur" (*Rusa aris-totelis*) brings even now a flush of shame to our brow as we remember how we heard a crash in the jungle to our left and "fluffed off" at a great brown body that we caught a momentary glimpse of. Then the disgust, the, alas! naughty word that would escape as, on going up to investigate our prize, we found it a *hind* instead of the antlered monarch that our heated imagination had pictured! It taught its lesson, though, and the deaths of no more hind sambhur are recorded.

A few pages further on mark a day of great excitement; a long weary tramp after a "rogue" elephant, the unsuccessful shot, and the bitterness of despair that followed the shot as the huge pachyderm crashed off, caring as much for the misplaced 10-bore bullet we had put into him as he would for a flea-bite. But before the trip ended a gleam of sunshine seems to have flashed

across our path, and a rough sketch shows our first chital (*Axis maculatus*) hanging by his hind-legs in the impromptu larder afforded by the branches of a huge mango-tree. Ay, he was a goodly beast, with wide-spreading antlers and "all his rights," sleek and glossy of coat, with clearly defined white spots down his fat sides; and we can even now congratulate ourselves on the adroit manner we stalked him over that thick carpet of dead leaves, *sans* boots, and with our heart in our mouth.

Then comes a long record of bags made: snipe and quail, black partridge, duck, teal, geese, coolen, blue-rocks, pea-fowl, and all the *répertoire* of Indian small-game shooting, varied with occasional days at black buck, chikara (*A. Bennettii*), and nilghye (*Portax picta*), till at last we come to nobler game, an era in our life, when we fleshed our maiden spear in the grim grey boar! Truly sings the Indian poet,—

"Ah! who hath been in such a scene,
That scene can e'er forget?
In sorrow's mood, in solitude,
Its dream will haunt him yet."

Exciting as this proved, it was but child's-play to the record contained a few pages on, in merely these words, "Won my first 'spear'—a thirty-one incher. Rode Dooker, lent me by N——."

How every stick and stone of the rough hillside where the "sunder" was reared seems spread out before our vision! How we clattered down the steep rock-covered slope, our horse slipping and slithering at every stride; and what agony we experienced as a better mounted comrade shot past us and "laid in"; and then, oh joy! the pig jinks, our rival misses his spear; with one supreme effort we get up, and in spite of more jinking on the part of the hog, the veteran hunter we bestride takes us up to the boar, and we win the coveted "first spear"!

The death of many another and more noble boar is recorded, and recorded with more detail; but somehow the interest that attaches to our "first" of any game is lacking, and the scenes seem not quite so vivid. But it is ever so; and however great a hunter a man becomes in after-years, I firmly believe that the deaths of hecatombs of birds and beasts do not remain embedded in his brain as does the rabbit shot with the old single-barrelled gun that "entered" him to sport. Tell me, ye "customers," with your studs of a dozen or twenty hunters, you who take your pleasure in the "grass countries," do you in sober middle age, after going a cracker for forty minutes in the first flight, feel half, or even a quarter, of the thrill and glow of delight that you

experienced when, one bright October morning out cub-hunting, you were blooded by the huntsman? Do you ever feel half the affection for the three hundred guineas' worth of horse-flesh that flings the big fences behind him as a girl does a skipping-rope, that you felt for the rough little sheltie that scrambled over a gap with you into the field where you saw your first fox killed? I trow not—nay, I will even venture a modest wager that you do not. *C'est le premier pas qui coûte* is a very true saying, and one that applies to sport as to most other things. The first fox, the first grouse, the first pheasant, the first race-horse, the first salmon or trout, ay, even the first kiss of "love's young dream,"—these remain indelibly imprinted on our memories when we have drunk the cup of life to its dregs, and are far sweeter and more enduring than all subsequent delights.

But the book still stands open; let me turn once more to its faded pages. Ah! here it is—another "first" "Marouda; tigress, 7 feet 11 inches, and three cubs." How the scene comes back!—the reports that the said tigress was a man-eater (she had killed a man the previous day, but only because he came too near the spot where her little striped darlings were laid up, and never had any intention of eating him). How we pic-

tured to ourselves a good "scuffle" with this feline demon; how carefully we loaded a good many more cartridges than we could possibly require! We can see even now the jabbering throng of beaters as they collected in the *tope* of trees where our camp was pitched, the start, the selection of posts; we can feel the hot, still air, see the shadows cast by the clumps of bamboo and bare trees, the silent approach of the game, and then the very, very mild termination, for she fell like a log to a single bullet!

Other more exciting incidents occur later on. Five days spent in beating for a particularly leary tiger, which at last was bagged; a good scuffle on foot with a brute that nearly got home, and another when a tiger got on to our elephant's head, and we were in mortal terror of being pitched head-foremost into a deep nullah, on the borders of which the battle took place.

Days with bison, bear, and panther are also brought to mind by a further perusal, some exciting, some the reverse, but all possessing an interest to the writer, evoking as they do shades of bygone sport. Then a long blank, till the thread is once more taken up, and days of British sport chronicled. Now a day in the "West Countrie" with stag-hounds amongst the purple heights and wooded coombes of Exmoor; now one

on some sweet Devon stream, either hunting the wily otter with the veteran Collier, fifty-three years master of otter-hounds, or spent in luring the speckled trout from his native element. Fox, badger, and hare add their quota to the tale ; and shootings in the north and south, with the bags made and the names of the "guns," conjure up many pleasant days of sport. And so years after, perhaps, we turn back, and see every day brought before us, though depicted perhaps only in a few words. Take the following entry : "Fine but hard frost. Tried the South Ugie for duck. Got 6 mallard, a teal, and a brent-geese—the latter by himself with a lot of duck. Got him and a mallard 'right and left.' Missed 3 snipe. Fired 15 shots." Yes, it was an enjoyable day that spent in the crisp northern air ; and the bag, though modest, worked for.

Then, too, we recall the days when we "held straight," and got *kudos* accordingly ; or perhaps those when we were "off our shoot," and missed easy shots for some unaccountable reason, for we remember that we did not sit up late, we did not smoke too many cigars, nor drink too many "whiskies-and-sodas," on those particular occasions. Yet the records are true. Success and failure stare us in the face ; and though we may endeavour to frame excuses for the latter, and

congratulate ourselves on the former, yet what we have written down for our *own eye alone* bears an impress of truth, that not even the greatest caviller at facts can detract from.

“Written to put in a book!” the sceptic may exclaim, with a sneer. Not a bit, my dear sir. You or I may buck and exaggerate to others, but we do not do so to *ourselves*, and what we put down in our diaries as actual occurrences is truthful. Were it otherwise, what would be the value to us of such a record? Sporting fact and sporting fiction, charming though the latter is, particularly when dealt with by the master-hand of a Whyte-Melville, are two very different things. In the first case, the writer either records his sport for his own gratification, or for the information of others; in the second, he writes to amuse or interest the public. In the former, the incidents of a day’s sport will be jotted down in perhaps rough, unpolished style, but a style that will bring home to sportsmen the actual occurrences, whilst the reader will be able to paint in his mind’s eye the details and occasions of the scene. In the latter, a certain amount of irrelevant padding is deemed necessary to suit the requirements of the public. But of the respective merits of the twain, *sportsmen* will have but one opinion, and in their eyes, at least, the roughest

actual diary will possess far more value than the most polished, well-turned phrases, which have little to do with the subject in point. May not, therefore, the legend, "Hæc olim meminisse juvabit," be fitly inscribed in each Sporting Diary? Gainsay me who will, I think it may; for to the writer, at least, its contents will bring back happy memories of "days that are no more."



Brent Goose and Mallard. A lucky right and left.

CHAPTER II.

TIGER-SHOOTING.

TIGER-SHOOTING, considered as a sport, may be said to rank among the highest. It is one that calls forth the matching of man's reasoning powers, combined with courage, endurance, and self-command, against the more savage animal instincts of brute force and cunning. Doubtless the successful pursuit of all sport necessitates the exercise of these qualities more or less on man's part, but in tiger-shooting they are absolutely essential. Moreover, the dangerous character of the animal hunted, to say nothing of the scenery amid which he is found, adds a great zest and charm to the chase. Even from a purely humanitarian point of view, if from no other, the destruction of a fierce and dangerous animal must of itself prove a source of honest pride and keen satisfaction to the man who, by the exercise of his skill, rids his fellow-

men of a scourge, such as tigers often become. In addition to this, the sportsman, should success crown his efforts, will have the pleasure of possessing trophies in the shape of skins which for beauty and colouring are unrivalled; and further, the remembrance of days of thrilling sport, with all its attendant excitement, must ever afford him, in after-years, a source of pleasant recollection, and a theme of conversation of which he will never weary.

Although there is much in tiger-shooting which, looked upon as a mere matter of skill, or as exercise, may render it inferior to other Eastern sports in the eyes of some, yet it is surrounded by attractions which few others possess. There is a something that stirs the blood at the mere thought of attacking and vanquishing an animal before whom man, though well armed, is comparatively helpless; before whom every other denizen of the jungle quails; a creature that for colour, agile strength, beauty, and symmetry is unequalled in animate creation; that attracts men to its pursuit even after every other form of sport has ceased to charm them, or affords sufficient excitement to undergo the toil of shooting in a tropical and enervating climate.

The general impression with regard to tiger-shooting is decidedly erroneous. This impression

is, to a certain extent, inculcated by absurd drawings in several of the illustrated papers—drawings done by artists who, however clever in other respects, from the mere fact of never having participated in the sport, and being forced to take as their models the animals in the Zoological Gardens, must be unable to portray truthfully and accurately the various incidents of the sport, and the appearance, action, and postures of the hunted and hunter. I once saw, in one of the illustrated papers, a whole sheet devoted to a most ludicrous series of drawings, entitled “Tiger-hunting in India.” In one of the sketches the sportsman was depicted struggling on the ground with an infuriated tiger, and holding him down by the throat with one hand (fancy poor puny man having the physical force to perform such a feat!), whilst with the other he was preparing to administer the *coup de grâce* with a formidable-looking bowie-knife! In another the sportsman (whose “get up,” by the way, savoured more of Buffalo Bill and the Wild West than of an Anglo-Indian shikari) was shown calmly crawling up to a tiger through a dense grass-jungle with as much *sang-froid* as if he were merely stalking a flock of wild-duck! And yet hundreds of people will sincerely believe that this

sort of thing happens every day. Absurdities like these, combined with the reputation for exaggeration which Anglo-Indians of a former generation unfortunately acquired, tend to give the uninitiated a very false idea of the sport. They are, in consequence, either too credulous, or else they believe nothing. It is by no means uncommon to find people who think that one cannot take a stroll in an Indian jungle without running up against a so-called "Royal Bengal tiger!"—why styled "Royal," and why "Bengal," heaven only knows!—that for his pursuit a long line of elephants and innumerable beaters armed with fireworks, &c., besides a whole army of sportsmen, each with three or four rifles, are an absolute necessity. All nonsense.

To begin with, tigers do not exist in such very great numbers, owing to the increase in cultivation and consequent decrease of forests, and are scattered over a large area. Moreover, they are not found without a good deal of trouble and management, and it is perhaps not till the fact is brought home to one by many blank days and much disappointment, that one realises how comparatively few in numbers tigers really are, and how little danger attends a ramble in the jungles. A dozen tigers as the result of a two months' hot-weather trip is considered a remarkably

good bag, though, of course, this number is often exceeded; but then it must be remembered that the area of ground hunted over is remarkably large. Nor is the *magna committante caterva* of elephants and beaters essentially necessary, except in certain places which will be alluded to later on.

That strange adventures do occur at times there is no doubt, but they are the exception and not the rule; and for one tiger that really shows fight and makes good his charge, there are twenty that do not. Truth is often stranger than fiction, and many Indian sportsmen are chary of relating their experiences; nor without reason. I remember reading in one of the sporting papers a case in point, which will serve as an apt illustration. A gallant officer and well-known sportsman, who had slain his tigers by the score, was appealed to on some point connected with tigers, and to his questioner's astonishment professed entire ignorance of the subject. Pressed privately for his reasons for doing this, he replied that he "had found the tiger to be a prolific source of falsehood; that half the stories about hunting him were untrue, the other half gross exaggerations; and that therefore he deemed it more prudent to hold his tongue." Nowadays, however, when the transit between

England and India has been made so easy, and when India is so much more visited and better known than formerly (alas! to the detriment of sport, I fear), there is no doubt that in time more correct ideas will be formed on the subject. Still, I firmly believe that even at present the tiger-shooter is surrounded with as great a halo of romance and falsehood as the typical American "cowboy"; and that could some enterprising Anglo-Indian "Tiger Tom" spring up and depict the sport in a "Far East" show at Earls Court, or some other place of popular resort in the metropolis, with a few half-starved tiger cubs, deer, &c. (not forgetting the conventional coconut-tree, which from an English point of view is *de rigueur* in all oriental scenes), he would prove a formidable rival to, and meet with as enthusiastic a reception as, "Buffalo Bill."

As a field for sport, India stands unrivalled, and has attractions which no other country possesses, for it offers a vast area abounding in varied and numerous descriptions of game. It has climates of different degrees, ranging from the snow-clad peaks of the Himalayas to the burning plains of the Central Provinces; the country is now traversed by numerous railways, which make locomotion far easier than it was even twenty years ago, and Anglo-Indians being proverbially

given to hospitality, a man with decent introductions is passed on from house to house, and in case of sickness or accident, medical assistance is comparatively easily obtained at one of the numerous civil or military stations which abound. Lastly, good sport, and by this I mean big-game shooting, can be enjoyed with less expense, and with greater personal ease and comfort, than attend its pursuit elsewhere. For all these reasons, therefore, to the sportsman wishing to avoid the rigours and variableness of our English climate, and at the same time give full scope to his sporting energies, there is no finer field than the vast plains, jungles, and mountain-ranges of the sunny land of Ind, provided he has the necessary time and means at his disposal; for here he may take his pick of a variety of sports, and indulge to the top of his bent in any particular one for which he may feel inclined. As my topic, however, is tiger-shooting *pur et simple*, I will confine my remarks to that particular branch of Indian sport, and for the sake of the uninitiated give a few hints as to the modes and manners of its pursuit.

Let it be premised, however, that our sportsman is to a certain extent a lover of nature and an admirer of scenery (and what true sportsman does not combine both of these qualities?), for if

he be neither, half the charm of the sport will be lost. Should he be a naturalist, even the blankest day, as far as his bag is concerned, will hardly have been spent in vain, for he will probably have witnessed some new phase of jungle life, or have become acquainted with the habits, new to him, of some bird or beast; while, if scenery charms his eye, he will have unfolded to his gaze such beauties of sylvan landscape, such colouring, and depths of light and shade, as he could at no other time or in any other place see and enjoy, and which, could they be faithfully portrayed on canvas, would make the fortune of an artist.

There is a keen and indescribable enjoyment in seeing, as all who indulge in the pursuit must see, incidents of forest life such as can never be witnessed save by a sportsman. What can be grander than the sight of a tiger, the monarch of the jungle, as he stalks sullenly yet silently along, the very personification of muscular and agile strength, whilst the beautiful blending of the dark stripes with his fluvous hide accord so wonderfully with the ground over which he moves, and yet stand out in such striking contrast? What can be more graceful than a herd of spotted deer as they graze peacefully amid the forest glades, whilst the sunlight, flickering

through the leafy canopy above them, falls and plays on their dappled hides? What more gorgeous than a magnificent peacock trailing his long green and golden tail in all the pride of conscious and insolent beauty? What can convey a greater idea of animal courage, determination, and fierce impetuosity than a bristly boar—the grandest, perhaps, of all the denizens of the jungle—as he trots by champing his ivory tusks? What more ludicrous than the antics of a troupe of monkeys, led by some hoary patriarch, with his black face and white whiskers, so painfully yet ridiculously human? These and many others, which it would take hours to enumerate, will all be seen by the tiger-shooter, and pass before him as he waits and watches for his feline foe, and must, as he be not utterly callous to all the marvels of God's great universe, furnish him with matter of deep interest and reflection.

The man who wishes to succeed in tiger-shooting—or, indeed, in any branch of big-game shooting in India—must, in addition to health, strength, and a sound constitution, be endowed with the virtues of patience, pluck, endurance, and perseverance. These are essential, or success will not smile upon his efforts. Health he must have, or he will not stand hard work; and, without the latter qualities, he will often be doomed

to bitter disappointment. Added to these, and perhaps not the least necessary, are temperance and good temper—the first absolutely essential, the second very nearly so. Without the first a man must soon succumb to hard work and exposure in a tropical climate—for, remember, tiger-shooting is generally pursued during the hottest months in the year; without the second, the pursuit of tigers, and indeed of all large game, will, notwithstanding its numerous fascinations, be bereft of half its charms. Let not, then, the would-be slayer of tigers imagine that, in the pursuit of the sport, everything will be *couleur de rose*, and that he will easily achieve success. Far from it. Of course, if he is fortunate enough to obtain good introductions, and is invited to join the party of an experienced sportsman, his path will be considerably smoothed; but even then he will meet with trials and disappointments. No: tiger-shooting means physical hard work combined with experience; and unless a man is prepared to face the former and learn the latter, he had far better remain at home.

Tiger-shooting is popularly believed to be an expensive sport. Perhaps it is so to a certain extent, just as hunting and shooting are supposed to be at home. But then, similarly as these vary in the manner in which they are pursued,

so does tiger-shooting. Your hunting man who *must* hunt in the shires, and keep at least a dozen hunters and a couple of hacks, or the shooter to whom a grouse-moor and well-stocked coverts are a positive necessity, both find their favourite sport expensive—far more expensive than does the man who is content to get his three days a-week off a couple of horses in a less fashionable country, or he to whom a varied bag of some twenty head off a bit of rough ground has more charms than hecatombs of hand-reared pheasants. So with tiger-shooting. If you are content to do your shooting on foot, and, above all, know how to set about it, you will not incur the outlay entailed by having to beat with a whole army of elephants, which, it need not be added, all cost money to keep and feed. Still, when all is said, there do undoubtedly exist certain unavoidable expenses. *Imprimis*, really good weapons are a *sine quâ non*; for often your own life, as well as the lives of others, may depend upon the result of a shot.

Tents, camp furniture, supplies, beaters, servants' wages, young buffaloes and bullocks to be used as baits, rewards for information, not to say compensation that may have to be paid to the family of any injured beater (should such an event unfortunately occur—and accidents will happen sometimes, however well guarded against),

all cost money ; and so, unless a man is prepared to expend some £150 to £200 for a two months' trip, he had better not think about it. Of course, travelling expenses and outfit are not included in the above amounts. If the sportsman should be on the spot, and already possess tents, &c., the expense should be considerably less, the above sum being only roughly calculated for a person landing in India. It will therefore be seen that the outlay necessary for two months of varied sport in India is considerably less than that paid for a fair grouse-moor in Scotland ; and when the game obtainable in each country and its quality is contrasted, I think it may fairly be assumed that India bears off the palm.

One or two things should, however, be borne in mind by any one contemplating taking part in the sport, particularly if it should be his lot to direct operations and have the general management of affairs.

First, he should endeavour that the whole party is thoroughly comfortable without running into needless expense : by this I mean that he should provide ample carriage for the *impedimenta* and creature comforts of himself and his fellow-sportsmen.

Secondly, he should engage the services of a thoroughly reliable and high-caste shikari.

Thirdly, he should personally superintend the payment of the beaters, and men who have brought reliable *khubber*, or news, about tigers.

Fourthly, he should never allow the beaters to go into a bit of jungle for the purpose of turning out a tiger known to be wounded.

Fifthly, he should see that at the outset there are ample supplies for the servants and camp-followers, as well as horses belonging to the party; and further, that these supplies are replenished at the first big village passed.

I will now give my reasons for these suggestions, attention to which will materially aid in achieving success. In a tropical country like India, creature comforts, the want of which is not so much felt in a less enervating climate, are a positive necessity; and however willing a man may be to "rough it," the mere process of doing so for any length of time will in the long-run tell upon his constitution and energies. I do not for a moment mean to say that luxuries of all sorts are necessities, nor would I go so far as one writer on Indian sport has lately done, and recommend the sportsman to carry with him a plentiful supply of "bay-rum" for his complexion! But what I would suggest is, that a fair supply of wine and beer, and a small supply of spirits, with plenty of soda-water, tinned vegetables, jam, &c., should be

taken. All these will help to eke out and vary the scanty jungle-fare with which the party must be content, for Indian game, as a rule, is precious poor eating. Clothes, boots, bedding, chairs, tables, and books (and these latter are a godsend during the long hot hours of day which are spent in enforced idleness when no sport is obtainable), all take up room; and having the means of making one's self comfortable under all circumstances, tends much to pass time pleasantly that would otherwise prove irksome.

In a sparsely populated district, *hackeries*, as native carts are called, are unobtainable; and even where they are, their owners are seldom willing to travel far beyond the limits of their own village. For this reason the engaging of a herd of Brinjari bullocks and their drivers is advisable, the usual charge being seven rupees per pair of bullocks *per mensem*, and some additional wages for the owner and his assistant drivers. A herd of twenty-four bullocks should carry most of the kit of a party of three, of course not including tents.

As much will depend on the head shikari, care should be taken to engage only a keen, thoroughly reliable man, and, moreover, to engage him some months previously. These men are much sought after, and are generally well known.

Plenty of so-called shikaris are to be had who will produce the most flowery testimonials as to their abilities—all which have probably been manufactured or forged in the bazaar—and who, though they may be able to show their employers plenty of small game, know about as much of tigers and the means of finding out and tracking them as the man in the moon. They do not know their business, and if found fault with, that favourite excuse of the Indian ne'er-do-weel, "*Bhukar aya*" ("I've got fever"), is pretty sure to be forthcoming. The advisability of your shikari being a high-caste man arises from the fact that in India caste governs everything, and has a paramount influence on the native mind. A man of good caste will succeed in obtaining information and assistance where another of low caste would fail ignominiously, even by the use of bribes and threats, to obtain an iota of reliable intelligence. It is needless to discuss here what caste is; suffice it to say that a beggar may be of the highest, whilst a wealthy and prosperous man may be of the lowest caste, and that the beggar will be more venerated than his brother who is more blessed with this world's riches. A man must, however, like a poet, be born in any particular caste—*nascitur non fit*. The chief difficulty is to get reliable information about

tigers in a particular neighbourhood. A great many reasons combine to make natives unwilling to give such information—pre-eminent amongst others being the probability of their being made to beat, *nolens volens*, and getting little or no pay for doing so; and further, that it is likely to bring down on their village a large encampment of sahibs, to which they are very averse, and not without justice. “For,” they argue, “the presence of the tiger is better than all this concourse of people, who take us away from our work, demand from us supplies of grain, &c., which we cannot spare, and the use of our carts and bullocks, which we want for other and more urgent purposes. No; we will not tell them of the tiger!” Occasions have occurred, and do still occur, where villagers have been thus badly treated, and there are few well-known resorts of tigers where some such story has not been handed down amongst the population. Difficulties like these an intelligent shikari of high caste, if he is worth anything, will be able to overcome, and by the exercise of tact and discretion, aided by the no less powerful co-operation of caste, wheedle and coax information out of the most obdurate of villagers. Of course such men are only procurable by the promise of high wages and the Government rewards for all tigers killed.

It is decidedly advisable that the payment of beaters, &c., should be personally superintended by one of the party. If a native is intrusted with this, however trustworthy he may be in other respects, some of the coin is sure to stick to his palms by the inevitable Indian custom of *dustoor*, and thus the unfortunate beaters get mulcted of some of their well-earned pittance. The consequence is, that being badly paid, they are dissatisfied and grumble, and the only consolation they receive is, "*Sahib ki hookum*" ("It is the sahib's order"). They argue, therefore, that the sahib is a stingy brute, and spread the report accordingly, and the next time sahibs visit the neighbourhood beaters are not forthcoming. For the same reason men who bring good and reliable news of tigers should always be rewarded liberally. It is the best policy, depend upon it, to be generous, if only from a selfish point of view.

One matter that should be most carefully attended to, and a rule that should be most rigidly observed, is the fourth point to which I have called attention—viz., that never under any circumstances should men be sent in to beat for a tiger that is known to be wounded. More accidents to beaters happen from this cause than from any other. News travels fast in the East,

and once a man is mauled, the party employing him are pretty sure to get a bad name, and find numerous difficulties thrown in their way the farther they travel; and not only will they suffer in this respect, but those who may follow them also.

I personally on one occasion experienced a case in point. My party had arrived at a place in the Nizam of Hyderabad's territory, just on the borders of Berar, where we knew of three tigers. No amount of inquiry or cajolery on our part could, however, extract any information regarding these tigers from the villagers, till one of our party produced an old *purwanah* from the Nizam's Dewan or Prime Minister. The sight of this document (though it was several years old) had a magical effect, and we were informed that two of the tigers were in the vicinity of our camp, and not two miles distant. It then leaked out that, about a month previous to our arrival at the village, a young and inexperienced civilian had beaten for these tigers. He had fired at one and wounded it; then had insisted on the coolies beating again for it, with the result that one poor wretch was killed by the wounded animal. The villagers thought, and perhaps not unreasonably, that we might pursue the same tactics, and so preferred our room to

our company. However, we had the satisfaction of killing the two remaining tigers, and left the place with a different character from that of our predecessor. Besides, looked at from a purely manly and chivalrous point of view, it cannot be denied that it is mean, not to say cowardly, to send a lot of poor, half-naked wretches, armed with nothing more formidable than sticks, into thick jungle to beat for a fierce and dangerous animal, rendered doubly so from enduring all the agonies of a wound in the scorching heat of day—an animal which one would think twice about before encountering alone and on foot, though with the best arms of precision in one's hands. No; if a tiger is wounded and the party have no elephant with them to follow him up on, it should, I think, be considered a point of honour amongst them to walk him up. A tiger, though he may have been comparatively inoffensive previously, when he is suffering from a wound becomes a very different animal. His temper gets soured, he is ever on the look-out to become the aggressor, and to resent the approach of man, which he naturally connects with his wound, by charging and severely mauling, even if he does not kill him outright. I contend, therefore, that every possible precaution should be taken to prevent accidents occurring or a wounded tiger being

left behind by the party. I am quite aware that this contention may by some be deemed absurd and quixotic; but I firmly believe, and I think most Indian sportsmen of experience will bear me out, that not only in the interests of humanity, but of the sport itself, it will prove the wisest plan in the long-run to exhaust every possible means to account for a tiger known to be wounded, even though it may involve giving up several days of your trip in the endeavour to achieve success.

The last point to which I would call attention, and which is by no means the least important, is the advisability of seeing that the supplies for native servants and camp-followers—such as the rice, *ghee* (clarified butter), flour, &c.—as well as grain for the horses, be replenished at the first large village passed. It will frequently occur that the sportsman's camp is pitched near some wretched little collection of huts in the heart of the jungle, dignified by the name of village, the inhabitants of which probably only cultivate sufficient grain and rice for their own personal wants, and who can ill spare any from their slender store. When, therefore, the sahibs come with their numerous retinue, and demands are made for various commodities, the villagers are naturally reluctant to supply them, as by so

doing they would themselves run short. It often happens that they are forced to do so, and then the sahib gets a bad name. The news spreads rapidly, and once a party gets a name for being high-handed or for not being a good paymaster, the reputation sticks to sportsmen in general. It is the old story of giving a dog a bad name; and not only will they be disappointed in the matter of getting news of tigers, but probably they will find the next village they visit deserted, and neither supplies nor beaters to be got. Native servants are notoriously careless in this matter of laying in supplies, and it is therefore most necessary that one of the party should by personal supervision satisfy himself that this point has been properly attended to. It will therefore be easily seen that an expedition properly organised, and where the sportsmen provide their own supplies, &c., will be more likely to secure the hearty co-operation of the people than one where the reverse is the case, and they will flock in to aid in driving the jungle for a good sportsman who treats them kindly and liberally, and who, they know, will not risk their lives unnecessarily, or deprive them of their staple articles of existence.

The methods of hunting tigers may be classed under three headings. First, beating with a

line of elephants and shooting from a howdah. Secondly, sitting up in a *méchan*, or platform, constructed in a tree, either over a bait or a pool of water. Thirdly, shooting them on foot or from a tree when driven forward by beaters to the guns.

Of the first method, as pursued in the vast grass-jungles of the Terai, Lower Bengal, and the Doon valley, I have had no personal experience, so am not entitled to speak as to its advantages with any amount of accuracy. It is perhaps the most common mode of pursuing the sport, and the one with which the public in general is most familiar through hearsay. This plan is adopted where the only chance of a shot is from the elevated position occupied on the back of an elephant, and where the high dense grass-jungle prohibits the use of beaters or going on foot one's self. Still I do not think that this method calls for any great knowledge of woodcraft, for a number of sportsmen with a long line of elephants may kill tigers (and many are so killed) by simply beating on chance through any bits of likely covert. Of course this necessitates a good deal of snap-shooting directly the game is started, the tiger only being viewed now and then for a moment as he bounds through the long grass.

The second method is the one most generally practised by the native shikari, to whom time is no object, and who possesses an unlimited amount of patience. It is, however, one that does not commend itself, as a rule, to the British sportsman, though to a lover of nature the lonely night-watch (should he be able to keep awake) will occasionally offer great attractions, and afford him opportunities for observing phases of jungle life that he would see at no other time. But to most men, even the most ardent, a few nights thus spent suffice. Being half bitten to death by mosquitoes, besides sitting in a cramped position for several hours, with the inability to ascertain the result of one's shot till daylight, chokes off most men. I will therefore dismiss these two methods without further comment, and confine my remarks to the last mentioned—viz., shooting on foot or from trees, as generally practised in Central India, where the teak-forests and rocky ravines afford no facilities for beating with a line of elephants.

The locality of a tiger or tigers having been ascertained, a young buffalo-calf is tied out as a bait during the night. Several of these may be picketed in the jungle near haunts that the tiger is known to frequent, and may be within a radius of some miles from camp. They are

visited early in the morning, and if the shikari finds that one has been killed he makes a wide *détour* or ring round the spot. If he is unable to track the tiger out of this circle, and if, moreover, he sees any vultures perched on trees in the vicinity of the kill, it may be pretty safely conjectured that the tiger is not very far off, and is probably laid up for the day, sleeping off the effect of his meal. News of the kill is then brought to camp, and beaters having been collected, the party set out about eleven o'clock, when it is very hot. The reason of this is, that tigers are averse to travel far in the heat of the day. Tigers have, like many other animals, particular paths which they follow, and these are well known by the local men, whose experience on this point it is generally safe to rely on. Trees, or, if there are none suitable near at hand, rocks, are then chosen as the positions for the different guns to occupy. These are called *nākas*. A good plan is to have a light bamboo ladder which can be easily carried and fixed against a tree. You then can stand on any rung of the ladder, should no branch be handy to sit on. The guns having been posted with as little noise as possible, the shikari goes back to where the beaters have been formed up in line, and on his joining them the beat

begins with all the noise capable of being produced by some twoscore dusky throats, aided by the beating of tom-toms, blowing of horns, and all manner of native music. Very often the first shout is sufficient to rouse the tiger, who moves off quietly and sulkily, and probably affords one of the sportsmen a shot.

And here let me remark that you should never fire at a tiger till he is past you. Should you do so, there is the chance of turning him back on the advancing beaters. If the tiger be only wounded, the beaters should, by means of a preconcerted signal, be at once withdrawn and made to mount trees, whilst the sportsmen should follow the animal up on foot, or on an elephant, if they are fortunate enough to have one with them. This plan will ensure the safety of the beaters, and afford them opportunities of marking the game down.

Tiger-shooting on foot is generally condemned on account of its attendant danger: doubtless, in the case of a solitary sportsman there is danger, very great danger, and a man who pursues this method systematically is bound sooner or later to come to grief; for a man on foot, and in jungle where there is an atom of cover large enough to conceal a tiger (and it is marvellous how they do conceal themselves, even from the keenest vision), has but

little if any chance with an animal bent on killing him. Many of the tigers said to have been shot on foot are in reality killed from trees, but still many are undoubtedly killed fairly on foot. Of course, in doing this there are great risks; but if proper precautions are taken, if the sportsmen keep well together, and are cool and collected, it is not the insane suicidal sort of amusement it is popularly supposed to be. A tiger is by nature a cowardly animal, and unless he be wounded or finds his retreat cut off, will seldom go out of his way to attack man. If he is wounded, though, it is quite another thing; at such times he will not hesitate to charge, but even then he seldom makes good his charge against three or four determined men armed with breech-loaders. He fears man more than anything else, and though he will charge pluckily enough, to all appearances, he generally shows an inclination to shirk the last few yards, trusting to his terrible coughing roar to intimidate his foes.

With regard to this habit of the tiger of roaring in his charge, or when suddenly surprised, it is no doubt an element in his favour; for no man who has not heard it under similar circumstances can conceive the intense amount of nervousness it generates, even in the stoutest heart, when heard for the first time. Of course there have

been instances in which tigers have made good their charge on several cool and determined sportsmen, whereby one of their number has suffered ; but these have been the exception, and have been effected by tigers probably cursed with a more than usually fiendish temperament, and who perhaps, by experience, have learnt to know that man is not, after all, the terrible creature the feline mind thinks him to be. These exceptions go far to prove the rule, that in nine out of ten cases tigers will not, in spite of all their bounce, charge right up to a compact and firm body of men.

No doubt all these methods of pursuing the sport have their advantages as well as their champions, but to my mind the death of one tiger shot on foot seems worth a dozen shot from an elephant. Perhaps I may be prejudiced through ignorance, and not entitled to give an opinion ; but it seems to me somehow more sporting, more exciting, and more satisfactory in every way, to know that you have personally worked hard to encompass the death of your enemy, that you have met him on equal terms, stood up to and vanquished him. It must not be thought that I am sneering at or decrying tiger-shooting from a howdah : far from it. In many instances elephants are a positive necessity. I merely say

that to my mind, and to that of many other sportsmen of far greater experience than myself, killing your tiger on foot, with two or three comrades, is better fun, affords more sport, and is more satisfactory in every respect, than killing him with the aid of some twenty elephants and a dozen sportsmen, some of whose shooting on such occasions is apt to be just a little bit wild !

It is true, certainly, that a tiger will sometimes make good his charge, and actually effect a lodgment on an elephant's back or head (generally the latter)—in fact, one such experience I personally underwent ; but, as I said before, as a rule they funk the last few yards of their charge if received boldly, and if even they do make it good, it is the unfortunate and unarmed mahout who runs the greatest risk, not the sportsman in the howdah.

The characters of tigers vary considerably, and may be roughly classed into those which prey principally on game, those which live on domestic cattle, and those which, for their preference for human flesh as an article of diet, come to be known as "man-eaters." It must not, however, be supposed that any particular tiger confines himself strictly to one sort of prey—he takes probably what fortune sends in his way ; but there are undoubtedly a large number who seem

to prefer the two former articles of diet, and a few—fortunately comparatively few—that select the latter.

The regular game-killer is a shy and wary animal, retiring in his habits, and avoiding the presence of man. He generally selects as his haunt some secluded spot among the hills or in a rocky ravine, where pools of water remain in the hot weather, and cool caves or overhanging rocks afford him shelter from the fierce rays of the sun. He is lightly made, very active and enduring as well as cunning, and for these reasons somewhat difficult to bag.

Far different is the known cattle-killer, which is usually an older and heavier animal, averse to much exertion. In the hot weather he usually takes up his residence near a village, in thick covert close to water, from whence he can easily sally forth to attack the herds of village cattle as they come to drink; in the cold weather he follows a herd as they go to graze in the jungle, and where the high green grass affords him ample facilities for stalking them whilst they feed. He is careless of man from coming constantly in contact with him, though to a certain extent his innate cowardice prevails, and numerous instances are on record of a cattle-killer having been driven off his prey and ignominiously put to

flight by no more formidable adversary than a little native cowherd - boy armed with a stout stick ! Favourably situated coverts generally hold one or more such tigers during the hot weather ; and, oddly enough, if one season all the occupants are killed, the next one others will have taken their place. It is for these tigers that buffalo-calves are tied out as baits ; and, cruel as it may seem to do this, there is no doubt that the death of a tiger saves much more suffering than is caused to the animal sacrificed to effect the purpose.

“ Man - eaters ” are, happily, rare ; for where one exists it becomes a regular scourge, the population for miles round being afraid to pursue their usual avocations, or to stir out unless in large bodies, in case any should fall a victim to the dreaded animal. What the cause may be of a tiger becoming a man-eater can only be a matter of conjecture, but the animal is often an old one and a tigress. Various theories have been adduced to prove why a tiger should become a habitual eater of human flesh ; but the most probable one is, that such an animal having become decrepit, either from old age or from wounds, is unable to procure its ordinary food, and so, finding that the killing of man is a comparatively easy task, takes to this method of obtaining its meat. Man-eaters are invariably

most cunning, and seldom frequent the same locality for any length of time. Here to-day, they will be miles away to-morrow, and though having apparently so far overcome their instinctive fear of man as to attack him unprovoked, they seem to possess a wonderful amount of sagacity in discriminating between an armed man and a defenceless victim. Why the offenders should so frequently be females it is difficult to explain. Perhaps when troubled with the cares of a family they find it hard to obtain food by ordinary means, and so take to the more pernicious but more easily accomplished method of killing man. There is a popular fallacy that a man-eater has a mangy skin, and this has been attributed to its diet; but I do not know of a single instance, nor have I ever read of one on reliable authority, where this has been found to be the case, two man-eaters that I knew of having beautifully bright glossy skins. I believe that the origin of the fable arose from the fact that, as I said before, many man-eaters are old animals, and that with increasing years their skins become paler in colour, and the black stripes less distinctly marked. This may at first sight give them the appearance of being mangy.

I will now conclude by asking the reader to accompany me to the jungle, where for his edifi-

cation, and in his imaginary company, we will endeavour to find and kill a tiger that will show us some sport.

We will suppose that it is a burning hot day during the first week in April, and that our camp is pitched near a village, and in the cool shadowy depths of a grove of mango-trees. It is about nine o'clock in the morning, and we are sitting outside our tent in the pleasant *déshabille* of shirt, slippers, and pyjamas, topping up our breakfast with a bowl of that excellent compound, "mango fool." As the last mouthful is finished, and we are preparing to light our pipes, the sight of a dusky figure advancing across the *maidan* (or plain) attracts our attention. His quick pace denotes that the man is the bearer of good news; and so he is, for on reaching us he salaams, and says, with an air of satisfaction, "*Ghara hua*," which may be interpreted as meaning "There has been a kill." Further interrogation discloses the fact that he has been despatched by our shikari, Lutchman, to inform us that there has been a "kill" at a spot some six miles distant, that he has marked the tiger down, and that he is collecting beaters who will be all ready on our arrival. We are also to mind and bring a few fireworks with us. Giving the bearer of this pleasant news a slight gratuity, we

dismiss him for the present, and are soon busy seeing that our rifles, lunch, and *chaguls* (leathern water-bottles), are sent on, also the elephant; for we are lucky enough to have one with us, which, though perhaps not staunch enough to shoot from, is sure to prove useful in turning the tiger out of any extra thick piece of covert. This done, we proceed leisurely to don our shikar clothes, which consist of short jacket and breeches made of a fine sort of canvas (called *chovsoothee*), and sambhur-skin boots. We then mount our ponies or horses and proceed to the spot, which we reach about eleven o'clock. Here we find Lutchman, who awaits us with a grin on his swarthy countenance, which denotes that he has made a good *bandobast* or arrangement. The place where the tiger has been marked down is a little ravine that, running down from some low rocky hills, debouches into a river-bed, now dry with the exception of occasional pools of water dotted here and there. Between these, large patches of jow and jámán bushes, interspersed with rank coarse grass, spring from the sandy soil and afford good cover. As we near the spot, Lutchman points with satisfaction to a number of vultures congregated on some bare trees half-way up the ravine and overlooking it. A slight consultation ensues between him and the local

shikaris, and then the beaters are sent round by a circuitous route to beat the ravine down from the top, whilst you and I are to guard it lower down some hundred yards from its point of junction with the river. Your *ndaka* is a large rock on the left-hand bank, whilst I occupy a tree some fifty yards inland on the opposite side.

And now keep quite still. You may have to wait half an hour or more, but your patience will be rewarded, I promise you. Hark ! Now, look out, for the beat has begun, and that pandemonium of sound, as it floats down on the hot noon-tide breeze, will soon have our game on foot. Ah ! what was that rustle on the dead leaves just below you ? Only a peacock, or maybe some jungle-fowl. They are always the first to move, you know. There ! that sudden rush *must* be the tiger coming you think, and you feel your pulses throb and catch your breath with excitement. No ; it is only a chital, or spotted deer, rushing madly forward, frightened by the discordant din. The lord of the jungle moves much more quietly, I can assure you. Then a black bear comes lumbering along with its ungainly form and shambling gait. Your rifle will cover it instinctively, I know, and you long to let drive at *Ursus labiatus* ; but remember, we agreed to fire at nothing but tiger, so Bruin escapes this time. Never mind, we will

look him up to-morrow. Nearer and nearer comes the sound of the advancing beaters, and you begin to think Lutchman's *bandobast* is perhaps not quite so good as he fancies, and that there is no tiger here, when suddenly, as if it had sprung from the ground, so stealthy and noiseless has been its approach, a magnificent tiger stands before you!

Yes, there he is, as large as life, standing quite motionless, with the exception of a slight tremulous twitching of the point of his tail, betokening that he is not over and above pleased at having his mid-day siesta thus disturbed. His ears are pricked, and as he stands there looking back over his shoulder, whilst the sunlight falls on his bright chestnut-and-black-striped hide, tell me if he is not a sight worth looking at—the ideal of a beautiful animal, of agile muscular strength and beauty? Don't move now, whatever you do. He is apparently satisfied that he had better move on, and with an upward curl of his lips, which he sweeps with a great red tongue, he slouches sullenly on towards you. Now, now! he is past you, and not twenty yards distant. You can't miss, so aim just behind his shoulder, and good luck to you.

Bang! "Wough, wough." You've hit him right enough, for, see, he flinched at the shot and

half tumbled over, sending the dust and dead leaves flying. But quick! let him have your left barrel. Ah! that was a miss, for I saw the bullet splinter the bark of yonder tree. You shot over him. Now he has plunged into the ravine, and is scrambling up in my direction; but don't fire, for he is in a line with me, and I have no wish to be the recipient of your attentions! Confound him! he will pass the wrong side of me, stuck up as I am in this beastly tree (how I wish we had brought the ladder!). I can only fire to my left, and he is circling round to my right. He looks sick, though. No doubt he is, with your 12-bore bullet in him. I must risk a shot from my left shoulder, so here goes. Bang! and I am nearly knocked off my perch. I thought so, a clean miss, and no more acknowledgment of my politeness than an angry grunting roar, as he gallops on and disappears over a little rocky ridge to my right.

Now come on and join me, and we will see if there are any traces of blood. In the meantime I will blow my whistle, which is the signal for Lutchman to get the beaters out of harm's way and bring up the elephant, for I'm morally certain you hit the tiger with your first shot. Yes, all right. I told you so. Look at those drops of blood on the dead leaves as he came towards me, and there on that flat stone you will see a larger

patch. Lutchman, as he comes up and we point out these signs, sagely remarks, with a grin, "*Golee kya, sahib*" ("He has eaten the bullet, sir").

And now our fun is about to begin, for he is not very badly wounded, and it is such a hot day, and the ground is so rocky, he won't go very far, and is bound to lie up soon, and then—then he'll show fight; so keep your weather eye open and shoot straight.

Lutchman has brought with him some half-dozen beaters, including the three local shikaris; so with Lutchman carrying my spare rifle, and Kissim acting as your gun-bearer, we form quite a respectable *posse*, and quite enough to deter most tigers from making a more intimate acquaintance with us. Keeping all together, we take up the tracks, one of the local men leading, whilst we cover his advance with cocked rifles. After a little distance the blood ceases, and tracking becomes difficult. The local men, however, are equal to the occasion. A scratch on a stone, a broken blade of grass, a crushed leaf, are all signs intelligible enough to them; so we carry on the trail, which leads along a rocky slope. Then the blood ceases, and tracking becomes most difficult, till at last it can be carried no farther. Holloa! what is all that row some two

hundred yards ahead? A troop of the large Hanúmán monkeys are legging up the trees, where, nimbly climbing to the topmost branches, they shake them violently, pouring forth a torrent of abuse in monkey language. You will notice it is quite different from their usual cry—a sort of sharp angry bark, denoting intense alarm; and well they may feel this, for probably our friend is sneaking along and heading towards the river. Thank you, *Messieurs les singes*; we'll owe you one for this good turn. And now come along, for we will hit the trail again. Yes, here you are. See! there are pug-marks on that little dusty bit of soil, and lower down on the river-bed they are plain enough, leading into that large patch of jow. Taking a ring round, we satisfy ourselves that the tiger has not left the cover; and then the services of the elephant are called into play, whilst we station ourselves on a rock at the far end, with our little band behind us. The elephant has not traversed a quarter of the covert when, with a loud “whr-e-w,” he curls up his trunk, turns tail, and bolts. The cur! it is just as well we did not try shooting off him. At the same time, with an angry roar the tiger charges out towards us across a spit of sand, his tail on end, and looking very fierce. It is all brag, however, on his part; the intervening open

space and the compact body of men he sees deter him, and he turns off to a smaller patch of covert, saluted *en passant* by our four barrels. A brace of hits; for, see, he flinches, though, recovering himself, he disappears again into thick cover. The refuge he has now gained is a small patch of jámán-bushes and rank yellow grass below the sloping river-bank, and separated from it by an open stretch of sand and rocks some forty yards across. We consult, and come to the conclusion that we will stand on the bank, and get the coolies to pelt him from above. No sooner decided than we carry out our plan. The first volley of stones has no effect. Happy thought! let us try one of those fireworks that we brought with us. As the missile goes hissing and spluttering into the covert it produces our friend at once, and out he comes with a roar, full of spite, hatred, and malice. He means coming on this time, for the pain of his wounds and the heat are telling on him, and he won't stand any more bullying. Is he not a grand sight as he charges forward, with his whiskers standing out and every hair on end, making him look even more gigantic than he is, whilst he gives vent to those terror-striking roars? But we are in an almost impregnable position, and four shots ring out in quick succession. As we turn for our second



"Nine feet six inches."

guns and the smoke clears away, we see our foe kicking convulsively on the sand, biting his fore-paw with savage and impotent rage. Quick now ! let us give him a couple more shots. There, that has finished him ; for, see, his limbs relax, his head droops, the blood trickles slowly out on to the thirsty soil, and—you have killed your first tiger. Hurrying down, we pelt the carcass with a few stones to make quite sure life is extinct ; that fact having been ascertained, we run the tape over our prize. “Nine feet six inches” is the record ; and so, *more Britannico*, we shake each other by the hand and offer mutual congratulations on having had such a good scuffle.

And then we open the tiffin-basket and proceed to refresh the inner man ; and don't we just enjoy that cool glass of beer, or claret-and-soda, that goes hissing down our parched throats ! and don't we just go through all the incidents of the day's sport over again ! and you, when you write home, will give a glowing description of your first tiger-hunt ; and when years have sped, and you have probably settled down to humdrum country life, and sit of an evening in your “den,” when your eyes rest on that tiger's skin, won't you just shoot him over and over again, and take a pleasure in relating the incidents connected with

his death to each succeeding olive-branch? I trow you will.

Yes, it is a grand sport, and must, as long as life lasts, remain graven on the memory of him who has once taken part in it; and though to read, the hunting of one tiger is much like another, and each bears a certain resemblance, yet a different set of incidents mark each day's sport in the hunter's memory, who vividly pictures to himself the circumstances attending the death of each particular animal, long long after the remembrance of many other and more important incidents of his life have faded away and become blotted out. Yes, it is worth going in for, if only for the pleasure of feasting on the recollections of days that are no more; and as such, let me recommend it, both for its past and present enjoyment, to all who may ever have an opportunity of indulging in the sport; and may they "have good luck and good sport to the fore."

CHAPTER III.

THE MEASUREMENTS AND WEIGHTS OF TIGERS.

THE question of what tigers measure is a fruitful subject of discussion with all Indian sportsmen, and one, moreover, which is fraught with no small amount of interest. I purpose therefore, in this chapter, devoting a few pages towards detailing some little evidence that I have been able to collect which bears upon it. Indian sportsmen of past generations were unfortunately credited with a certain amount of exaggeration, and even naturalists were not exempt from the charge. Of late years, however, more particular attention has been paid to actual measurements, and it has been deemed necessary to have facts and authorities recorded to verify statements. But even reliable authorities differ to a marvellous extent, and as examples I will note down a few statistics that I have been able to collect.

Hornaday, in 'Two Years in the Jungle,' gives

the measurement of a tiger he shot in Southern India (in the Wynaad jungles, I think) as 9 feet 8½ inches; weight, 495 lb.

In 1889, Sir Samuel Baker shot one in Central India measuring 9 feet 7 inches, and weighing 443 lb.

Colonel Kinloch, in his 'Large Game of Thibet,' states that "very few tigers exceed 10 feet in length, and most are under 9 feet 6 inches."

Mr F. A. Shillingford, the well-known shikari in Eastern Bengal, shot one measuring 9 feet 10 inches, weighing 520.8 lb.

"Rohilla," in the 'Field,' records one of 9 feet 8½ inches, shot in the North-West Provinces.

"Waltein," in the same journal, mentions one of 9 feet 11¼ inches, shot in Bengal, I think.

Jerdon gives the average length of male tigers as from 9 feet to 9 feet 6 inches, though he admits some may reach a length of 10 feet, "and perhaps some have been killed a few inches over that;" and he adds that the greatest authentic length he knows of is from 10 feet 2 inches to 10 feet 3 inches.

The late Mr G. P. Sanderson, of elephant fame, in 'Thirteen Years amongst the Wild Beasts of India,' says his experience points to 9 feet 6 inches as the maximum length of any tiger he shot.

This animal, which was well fed and in good condition, weighed $349\frac{1}{2}$ lb.

Colonel Gordon-Cumming, in 'Wild Men and Wild Beasts,' gives the average of "four fine stout tigers" as 9 feet $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

Mr A. G. Macdonald, of the Bengal Service, a man who has killed and seen killed as many tigers as most men, in a private letter informs me that the biggest tiger he ever saw "fairly measured" was 10 feet 5 inches.

Mr Baker, in 'Sport in Bengal,' alluding to Jerdon's remarks, observes that he underestimates the length of tigers, adding, "That while 10 feet may be accepted as the length of a fine tiger of the plains, 10 feet 3 inches is not rare, nor 10 feet 6 inches unheard of." He records his largest as 10 feet 4 inches.

General Rice, in 'Tiger-Shooting,' gives the measurements of tigers shot in Central India as 11 feet to 12 feet, and gives an average of males as 11 feet $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

Captain Williamson, in that quaintly illustrated work, 'Oriental Field Sports,' published in the beginning of the century, alluding to the length that tigers are said often to attain to, says: "However, in such frequency of monstrous growth, I will venture to assert that nine in ten [tigers] do not measure 10 feet from tip of the

nose to tip of the tail." At the same time he mentions a tiger killed on the Cossimbazaar Island, which, he says, "was 13 feet and a few inches"! Whether the "inches" amounted to one or 11 is left in doubt, however.

The late Rev. J. G. Woods, in 'Natural History,' alleges that the famous fighting tiger "Jungla" measured 13 feet 6 inches, though he omits to state how such an animal had his measurements taken whilst alive!

Mr R. A. Sterndale and Captain Baldwin both state that a tiger rarely exceeds 10 feet in length.

Buffon mentions one of 15 feet, whilst Sir Joseph Fayrer, in his book 'The Royal Tiger of Bengal: his Life and Death,' asserts that "the full-grown Indian tiger may be said to measure from 9 feet to 12 feet," but that he would only accept with "the greatest hesitation the recorded statement that Hyder Ali presented to the Nawáb of Arcot a tiger that measured 18 feet"! Either there must have been giants amongst tigers in those days, or else, like all Eastern legends, this "recorded statement" must have been well flavoured with the salt of exaggeration, so dear to the oriental mind.

In his book, 'Sport in Eastern Bengal,' Mr Frank B. Simson, a man as well known in Northamptonshire with hounds as he was with spear

and rifle after hog and tiger in India, states that no tiger killed by him measured more than 11 feet. He further quotes Sir Joseph Fayrer's opinion, as recorded in 'Nature' of 1878, in which that eminent authority states that, after a careful comparison of accounts, he has come to the conclusion that anything over 10 feet is very large, but that tigers may exceed 10 feet 3 inches, and that in a very few rare and exceptional cases 11 feet and even 12 feet have been recorded. Mr Simson further quotes an instance of a tiger in whose death he participated with Mr C. Shillingford, and though the skin measured 12 feet, all who were present when the animal was skinned declared it was over 11 feet. Mr Simson adds, however, that when alive the animal did not seem abnormally large to him, and declines to believe he was even 11 feet long.

In the 'Oriental Sporting Magazine' of 1872, a writer, under the initials of "M. G. G.," gives, amongst others, the length of two of the largest tigers he ever shot—viz., one of 10 feet 1 inch, whose skin measured 11 feet 4 inches, and one of 9 feet 8 inches. In the same magazine another writer, "Twelve Bore," records the death of a tiger "measuring, as he lay dead, 9 feet 10½ inches."

In 'Baily's Magazine' for 1873, a naval officer,

F. W. Bennett by name, records having been present when a tiger was harpooned from a boat whilst swimming in the sea near Singapore, which weighed 327 lb., and measured only 8 feet 6 inches.

In the 'Oriental Sporting Magazine,' vol. ii., No. 2, Old Series, a writer, signing himself "Rifle," records of a tiger shot in Assam, "that it measured, before being skinned, 12 feet 1 inch."

Having collected this evidence, I submitted it to Sir Joseph Fayrer, and had a long conversation with him on the subject. From this I gathered that he agreed with Jerdon to the extent that the length of tigers measured fairly varied from 9 feet 6 inches to 10 feet 3 inches, and that this was their average length; but he added that the occurrence of tigers over 10 feet 3 inches (the authenticity of which has been doubted) was attested by the evidence of several competent observers, who were quite aware that the measurements of the animal should be taken as he fell, and before he was despoiled of his skin, and whose evidence he had been at some trouble to collect and obtain. This evidence, added to his own personal experiences in Bengal, Oudh, and Nepaul, he considered conclusive, and that the evidence Jerdon required of tigers of a

greater length than 10 feet 3 inches, and even up to 12 feet, was forthcoming.

This evidence I cannot do better than reproduce in a condensed form from an able article that Sir Joseph contributed to 'Nature,' and to which he referred me for further information. In this article, after a prelude, he brings to bear his whole artillery of facts on sceptics; and I, for one, have gone down under such a salvo of irrefutable evidence, and must lower my sword and crave for quarter.

This evidence is compiled from the personal observation of sportsmen—all well-known men, mind, whose word could be relied on, and who would scorn to exaggerate.

1. Sir J. F. Yule, K.C.S.I., Bengal Civil Service, states that he has killed tigers of 11 feet odd inches twice or thrice, and that though he never had the luck to meet with one measuring 12 feet, he sees no reason why they should not attain that size.

2. Colonel George Boileau, Bengal Army, says he killed a tiger at Mutearah, in Oudh, that was well over 12 feet *before the skin was removed*; adding that he was of quite an exceptional size, and, in his experience of seventeen years' constant hunting, he had never seen his equal.

3. Colonel J. Sleeman, Bengal Army, states

that he never remembers killing a tiger over 10 feet 6 inches measured in his skin, though he has seen several skins varying from 11 feet 6 inches to over 12 feet.¹

4. Colonel J. Macdonald, Bengal Army, Revenue Survey, says that out of seventy tigers that he measured, the biggest was only 10 feet 4 inches, and that out of all these seventy only three reached 10 feet. The heaviest male tiger he ever weighed was 448 lb., the heaviest tigress 242 lb.

5. The Hon. R. Drummond, Bengal Civil Service, late Commissioner of Rohilkund, says he never saw a 12-foot tiger, though he shot one of 11 feet 9 inches, measured as he lay on the ground before being padded.

6. Mr F. B. Simson, Bengal Civil Service (whom I quoted in a former page, and who has shot some 180 tigers), quotes his two biggest tigers as 10 feet 11 inches, and 10 feet 4 inches; and though he never actually saw one measured exceeding these dimensions, yet professes his belief that instances of tigers measuring in a few rare and exceptional cases 11 feet, and even 12 feet, have been recorded.

7. Major-General Sir H. Green, K.C.S.I., C.B.,

¹ This can hardly be considered a fair test, as skins may be unduly stretched.—J. M. B.

Bombay, says that the biggest tiger he ever assisted in killing was one shot near Surat in 1848, which was 11 feet 11 inches, measured as it lay, and whose skin when pegged out was 12 feet 4 inches. Sir H. Green shot one himself which measured 10 feet 11 inches. He adds: "I heard by last mail from Claude Clerk, at Hyderabad, who said he had just killed to his own gun the biggest tiger he had ever seen, as it measured 11 feet 6 inches before skinning." Sir H. Green concludes by expressing his belief that, though they must be very rare, tigers of 12 feet and over do exist.

8. Colonel D. G. Stewart writes that he never saw or heard of a *bonâ fide* 12-foot tiger measuring that length as he lay in his skin, and that the largest he ever saw was 11 feet and $\frac{1}{4}$ inch. He had personally measured some eighty tigers. Colonel Stewart adds that he saw at San Francisco the skin of a Chinese tiger, beautifully proportioned as to length and breadth, which in life might have measured 12 feet. In India, however, he never saw anything approaching it. He adds that in the Central Provinces of India the tigers average from 10 feet 6 inches to 10 feet 8 inches.¹

9. The Hon. Sir H. Ramsay, K.C.S.I., C.B.,

¹ Good sportsman as Colonel Stewart was, I think he rather overshoots the mark here about Central Indian tigers—I mean as regards their average length.—J. M. B.

Commissioner of Kumaon, records his biggest tiger as 10 feet 5 inches, and considers anything over 10 feet large. He says he has heard of Bengal tigers measuring 12 feet; and that "a friend, G——, told me that his father, a Bengal civilian, had shot one measuring 12 feet 4 inches."

10. Mr C. Shillingford, a Purneah indigo-planter, a well-known shikari, and a personal friend of Sir Joseph Fayrer, one in whose company he had shot a great deal, and whose experience extended over thirty-five years, during which period he shot more than two hundred tigers, says that in 1849 he shot the largest tiger he had ever seen, and which, measured as he fell, proved 12 feet 4 inches. This tiger was very old, with short hair and light in colour. Mr Shillingford shot another of 11 feet 10 inches, and in 1855 one of 11 feet 4 inches. He shot several varying from 10 feet 6 inches to 10 feet; but he adds that "the majority of tigers seldom exceed 10 feet, and many are only 9 feet 8 inches to 9 feet 10 inches."

11. Mr Cumming says he shot a few over 11 feet: one at Rohinipore of 11 feet 4 inches; one at Kaliastrich, in 1865, of 11 feet 2 inches; and one at Gour, in 1871, 11 feet 2 inches. Mr Cumming states that he has seen the claw-marks of a tiger on the trunk of a tree 18 feet from the ground,

and adds that men who have only shot tigers in hills and rocky places are difficult to convince of the existence of these very large tigers, as hill-tigers are of a different class, and seldom grow large.¹

12. Major (now Sir) E. Bradford, K.C.S.I., says the largest tiger he ever saw was 10 feet 5 inches.

13. Colonel C. Martin, Central India Horse, says he shot a 10-foot tiger at Putulghur, and alludes to a large tiger shot by Mr White near Goona, which was measured by Mr Angelo, who stated that it was 12 feet 4 inches from tip of the nose to tip of the tail. These measurements were recorded in the 'Delhi Gazette.' They were evidently inaccurate, however, as Colonel Martin in a subsequent letter says: "White's

¹ This is certainly the case. Hill-tigers are usually bulky animals, but with shorter tails, and more "cobby" than their brethren of the plains. Of the sportsmen to whom Mr Cumming refers, I must say I was one, and this probably influenced the opinions I had formed. The fact, however, of a tiger's claw-marks being found 18 feet from the ground on the trunk of a tree, is no test as to the size of the animal itself. All the cat tribe sharpen their claws on the trunks of trees, and use the rough bark as a sort of "claw-pick" to remove any particle of decayed flesh that in the process of tearing their prey may have adhered to their claws. Tigers, like cats, are also fond of springing up a tree-trunk in play, and instances have even been recorded, though rarely, of tigers climbing trees, though this is a common habit of panthers, another of the feline tribe. I myself saw a tiger once spring up a tree-trunk to a height of 20 feet in sheer rage, after being fired at and wounded. Yet this animal when dead only measured 9 feet 6 inches.—J. M. B.

tiger, which I had always thought was 12 feet 4 inches, is no longer to be relied on for scientific inquiry, though it probably exceeded 10 feet.¹

14. Lieutenant J. Ferris, Bombay Army, who shot a great deal in Oudh, Nepaul, and the Central Provinces, says that the largest tiger he knew of was one shot in 1873 in Nepaul, which measured 10 feet 4 inches; the biggest he shot himself, also in Nepaul, was 10 feet 2 inches, and he adds: "He was considered a monster. The tigers in Lower Bengal may be larger, in the Central Provinces they are certainly smaller. It depends a great deal on how the tiger is measured."

15. General Ramsay, Bengal Army, mentions having shot a tiger in conjunction with that fine old sportsman Colonel Stewart, who died at Benares. The skin when removed was 12 feet from tip to tip. This tiger was not found for several days after being wounded, and when discovered was dying from loss of blood and starvation.² General Ramsay adds that 10 feet 6 inches is a very fair-sized tiger. He quotes his friend Colonel H. Shakespeare as having shot two tigers which measured 11 feet 8 inches and 11

¹ This is an example of how mistakes, however unintentional, do occur at times.—J. M. B.

² Here is another mere skin measurement, which is no real test of size.—J. M. B.

feet 6 inches, and concludes by expressing his belief that tigers of 12 feet and over do exist, though they are very rare.

16. Sir Charles Reid, K.C.B., informed Sir Joseph Fayrer that he had shot in the Doon a tiger which measured 12 feet 3 inches before the skin was removed.

17. The late Mr Frank Buckland, in corresponding with Sir Joseph Fayrer on this subject, refers him to his 'Curiosities,' published in 1866, in which is recorded the measurement of a tiger shot by Colonel Ramsay and Major B—— in the Kumaon Terai. Amongst other measurements, the total length is given at 12 feet ; length of tail, 3 feet 9 inches.

Sir Joseph Fayrer showed me a list of numerous tigers and their measurements which he had shot himself. Amongst these, two of 10 feet 8 inches and 10 feet 6 inches were the biggest recorded. Both were Bengal Purneah tigers.

This evidence which Sir Joseph Fayrer has collected may be thus summed up :—

Mr C. Shillingford, Colonel G. Boileau, and Sir Charles Reid, all vouch for tigers over 12 feet.

The same gentlemen, with Sir H. Green, Sir J. E. Yule, the Hon. R. Drummond, Colonel D. G. Stewart, Mr Cumming, and Colonel

Shakespeare, vouch for tigers 11 feet and upwards.

The above, with Colonel J. Sleeman, Mr F. B. Simson, Sir Joseph Fayrer, Sir E. Bradford, and the Hon. Sir H. Ramsay, vouch for tigers 10 feet 5 inches and upwards, all measured before the skins were removed from the animal.

Now this evidence, to my mind, is absolutely conclusive; and unless all these gentlemen, whose accuracy and integrity none can doubt for a moment, were mistaken, the fact that tigers of 12 feet and over have been shot has been satisfactorily proved, and not much more remains to be said.

Briefly, it may be considered that though the average tiger varies from 9 feet 6 inches to a little over, yet there have been, and are, tigers of 10 feet, which are large; that 11-foot and 12-foot tigers are rare and exceptional; and that those of over 12 feet are *very* rare. Making all allowances for errors in measurement, defective memories, statements made on hearsay and not based on actual eyewitness and notes recorded at the time, all must admit that Sir Joseph Fayrer has made out a very strong case, and one that must convince the most unbelieving.

Tail doubtless has a great deal to say to the actual length of a tiger, but mere length of

this part of the animal has nothing to do with its bulk and size. Some tigers are lanky herring-gutted brutes, with very long tails, whilst others are short and thick, with short tails, and it is quite possible that a 9-foot tiger may in reality be a finer beast than one measuring 10 feet. Weighing tigers, or taking their measurements from nose to root of tail in a straight line, is, I believe, the only really proper means to arrive at the fact of the animal being a fine one or the reverse. The first method is, however, impracticable in the majority of cases; whilst the fascination of being able to add a foot or two to the length of the animal they have shot by including the tail is too great a temptation to most men to be avoided.

I may perhaps be permitted to quote the opinion of Mr J. D. Inverarity, the well-known Bombay sportsman (whose plucky encounter with a lioness and his photographing his foe after the conflict will be fresh in the memory of many), as to the length of tigers, and this I do with the perhaps unworthy object of corroborating my own opinion. In a paper read before the Bombay Natural History Society, Mr Inverarity expresses his belief that the majority of tigers are under 9 feet, very few attain 10 feet, and that he never met one of that length. As Mr

Inverarity's experience has, I believe, been mostly confined to Southern and Western India and to the Central Provinces, this may tend to prove that tigers in the Northern and Eastern parts of Bengal attain a larger proportion than they do elsewhere. In a letter to me, Mr Inverarity says: "Mr Mulock, of the Bombay Civil Service, who has measured about 100 tigers (including tigresses), only found two over 10 feet.

"The largest tigress I ever saw was 9 feet. No measurement is reliable unless the measurer makes a written note at the time. My brother and I last hot weather (1890) killed four old male tigers in one beat. They measured 8 feet 9 inches, 8 feet 11 inches, 9 feet, and 9 feet 5 inches. The last one looked very much larger than the others. What would a 12-foot tiger look like? Measure 12 feet on the wall and chalk in a tiger!"

The late Major-General William Peyton, who was for over twenty years Conservator of the Canara Forests, wrote an account of that country for the 'Bombay Gazetteer.' "I can recall" (speaking from memory), he says, "only five instances of tigers being over 10 feet. It is quite possible that an occasional giant is met with. All the large measurements come from

Bengal and Purneah. They may run bigger there."

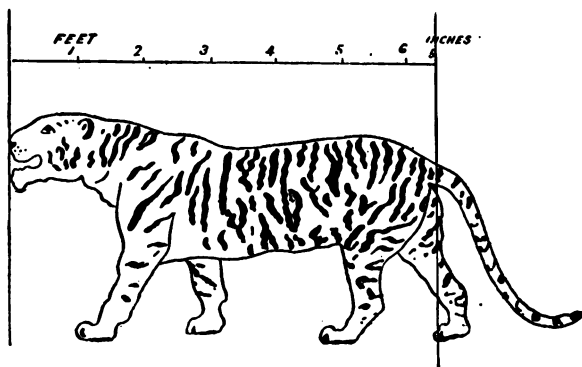
A word or two now as to *how* tigers are measured, and until some universal standard of measurement is adopted the question will never be settled satisfactorily. The naturalist's and sportsman's measurements of animals differ materially, and the length of an animal varies according to the method employed. Naturalists measure straight from one extremity to the other, but generally only from nose to root of tail, measuring the latter separately; sportsmen, in using the tape, follow the curves of the body. The subjoined diagrams will explain more clearly than I can in writing the great difference that exists between the two different forms of measurement.

No. 1 shows a tiger of 9 feet 10 inches measured from nose to root of tail between two sticks, the tail measurement being taken separately; whilst No. 2 shows the same animal measured along the curves of the body. Thus a 9-foot 10-inch tiger develops into one of 10 feet 6 inches!

A simple method for proving this is as follows: Take the height of a man, and then measure him along the curves of his body. By this means an average Englishman of 5 feet 8 inches will stand over 6 feet. A tiger of 11 feet 6 inches or 12

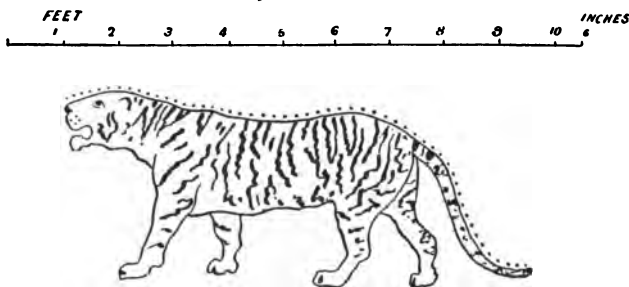
feet, measured by a naturalist, would probably be a foot shorter, if not more. As a proof of my argument I may mention that a short time ago

No. 1.—A 9-FOOT 10-INCH TIGER.



Naturalist's measurement: tip of nose to root of tail, 6 feet 5 inches.

No. 2.—A 9-FOOT 10-INCH TIGER.



Sportsman's measurement following curves of body: from tip of nose to tip of tail, 10 feet 6 inches.

I measured a very large tiger's skull in the South Kensington Museum of Natural History.

Measured over the occipital process to the end of the *foramen magnus* (which latter, by the by, increases in length considerably with age in tigers), it was $17\frac{1}{2}$ inches; measured by basal length—that is, inside the upper jaw—from the edge of the front bone to the end of the *foramen magnus*, the length was $12\frac{1}{2}$ inches, giving a difference of 5 inches!

Now we all know that occasionally memory is treacherous. As an instance of this I may relate that a short time ago I was talking to a well-known Indian sportsman on this very subject—viz., length of tigers. He is a man who has killed over sixty tigers and measured them directly they were dead. He said, pretty well in these words: “Nothing is to be depended upon but measurement and notes made on the spot. No man can trust his memory implicitly, especially after a lapse of time. Talking about big tigers, I shot one last year, which I told a friend of mine about in a letter. I had written to him that it measured 9 feet 8 inches; but before closing my letter, to make certain, I referred to my notes, and found it was only 9 feet 5 inches.” This shows what mistakes are made even with the best intention of being accurate.

Let me quote another case or two of how errors arise. In the ‘Field’ (I regret I cannot furnish

the date) appeared a few years ago an article entitled "Notes on Tigers," and signed "F. T. P." He says :—

"The largest tiger I was ever at the death of, measured, as he lay, 10 feet 1 inch; the skin, when pegged out, was 13 feet 4 inches. I noted the measurement at the time, and it was laughable how, after the lapse of time, the dimension of this animal varied according to the memory of the individual relating the circumstances. With some he was $12\frac{1}{2}$ feet long, and with others $13\frac{1}{2}$ feet; with others $10\frac{1}{2}$ feet, as he lay dead. It shows how necessary it is to record in black and white at the time exact measurements, otherwise one's memory is apt to prove treacherous. We thus hear of tigers of fabulous sizes. I myself believe 10 feet 8 inches, perhaps 10 feet 6 inches, to be the utmost length of a tiger, living or dead. Mr Campbell, Deputy Commissioner of Dubri, who has killed, and seen killed, a great many tigers, never saw one of more than 10 feet 4 inches."

Let me quote another instance; also gathered from a letter in the 'Field,' and signed "Merlin's Barrow," only this measurement refers to a tigress, which must have been of abnormal size for her sex. After describing the death of the animal, the writer goes on to say :—

“ The tigress was long, but so lightly built that four of us padded her without much effort, though the three natives were rather weakly men, and I was unable to exert much strength. We then turned homewards, the tigress swinging and stretching across the pad, for the three miles that intervened between us and camp. Arrived in camp, the tigress was thrown on to the ground, and two men laid her out straight, one man pulling at the head, the other at the tail. The men then let go, and I measured her with the utmost care from the tip of the muzzle to tip of the tail, along the curves of the body. The tape (a non-stretching one) made it 10 feet 5 inches. Knowing that this was an impossible measurement, I again applied the tape, and this time the length was 10 feet 3 inches. I tried again, and made it 10 feet 1 inch ; again, I made it 10 feet ; next I made it 9 feet 11 inches. Finally, after measuring some ten times more, the length was 9 feet 9 inches, and at that it remained stationary. This, as I have said above, was a perfectly careful and impartial measurement with a tape along the curves of the body. I then cut a twig 18 feet long, and made the natives measure the tigress, and also measured it myself. With this twig, which of course did not follow the curves of the body closely, the tigress measured, both

in mine and the natives' hands, 9 feet 5 inches, or 4 inches less than with the tape. I do not know what the tigress was immediately after she was shot; but if she was 9 feet 9 inches, she must be one of the very longest tigresses on record. I shall always regret not having measured her before padding her. I think that there are one or two points worth noticing in the above narrative. In the first place, may not some of the stories of very long tigers have arisen, not from exaggeration on the part of the sportsman, but from the tape having been applied after the tiger had been pulled out to a length he never attained in life by swinging and stretching for long hours across a pad? My tigress stiffened and shrank down 8 inches from what she was when she first came off the pad. Might not a tiger 10 feet 4 inches as he lay shot on the ground, be so pulled out by stretching and swinging all day long in a hot sun across a pad as to measure 11 feet 4 inches when first thrown off the pad on to the ground?"

Now I have quoted this letter at some length, as I think it throws a very important light on the question. Here we have a difference of 8 inches made between the first and last measurements, caused by the gradual relaxation of the muscles, flesh, and skin, all of which had been

unduly elongated owing to the means by which the animal had been conveyed to camp. A great difference, therefore, may exist between the length of a tiger when measured on the spot where it dies, and one measured before the skin was removed.

If my readers will carefully read over the evidence that I have thus put before them, they will note that in all Sir Joseph Fayrer says—with the exception of Mr C. Shillingford's 12-foot 4-inch tiger, "measured as he fell," and the Hon. R. Drummond's tiger of 11 feet 9 inches, "measured as he lay on the ground before being padded"—no mention is made of the *time* at which the measurements were taken, though most state the dimensions to have been taken "before the skin was removed." This goes far, in my opinion, to strengthen the theory of "Merlin's Barrow," and may account for the apparently numerous tigers over 10 feet. I do not for a moment question the fact of tigers having been killed up to, and over, 12 feet; but I do not think they are quite so common as some people would have us believe.

Another noteworthy point is, that most of the tigers quoted by Sir Joseph Fayrer were shot some years ago. In those days jungles were not so much shot over—owing to the absence of

railways they were less accessible—and natives did not shoot so much as is the case at present, and so tigers had a better chance of growing and attaining larger dimensions than they do nowadays.

I think, also, that the discrepancy which exists between the length of tigers killed in Bengal, Oudh, and Nepaul, and those killed in Central India, may perhaps be attributed in no slight degree to the manner in which the animals are conveyed to camp.

Amongst the great grass coverts of the former districts, a large number of elephants are used not only to carry the guns, but also for beating and to carry home the game. In Central India, where the ground consists mostly of forest jungle and rocky ravines, the shooting is mainly done from trees or on foot; and except in a few isolated instances, such as following up a wounded tiger, elephants are very little used. This necessitates the dead tiger being carried to camp on a rough litter made of branches of trees, on which the body is laid, and it has therefore no opportunity of being stretched, as it would be when bound across an elephant's back.

If sportsmen and naturalists would combine to adopt a standard of measurement, some exact idea might be arrived at of the actual proportions

of tigers; and I contend that the only fair way to do this is not to include the tail, whose length should be stated separately, whilst a note should be added how and when the animal was measured.

As a proof of the sort of measurements that every one interested in the subject should make, I may perhaps be allowed to quote those contained in a letter from Mr F. A. Shillingford to Mr C. T. Buckland. Referring to this tiger, which weighed 520.8 lb., in a letter dated February 11, 1888, Mr Shillingford says:—

“The external measurements and weight four hours after death were as follows—

Weight	520.8 lb.		
		Feet.	Inches.
Tip of nose to back of skull	1	6	
Back of skull to root of tail	4	11	
Root to tip of tail	3	5	
Total length	9	10	

Height from fore-foot heel-pad to withers, 3 feet 9 inches.

The length was taken with an almost new Chesterman's metallic measuring-tape, 'sportsman's style'—that is, the body of the tiger was laid flat on the ground, and straightened out as far as practicable; the end of the tape was then held at the tip of the nose, thence carried along the centre line of the forehead to the back of

the head, then along the neck, withers, and back to root, then tip of tail. The height was taken by placing a stick upright at his withers and another below his fore-foot heel-pad, and measuring the distance between the two sticks. . . . The head was boiled and the flesh removed, and the skull measurements, taken with a pair of steel calipers, in accordance with Mr Sterndale's suggestions, were as follows:—

	Inches.
Palatal measurement from outside insertion of incisors to anterior edge of <i>foramen magnus</i>	11 $\frac{1}{8}$
Length of skull from insertion of incisors to end of occipital process	14 $\frac{1}{4}$
Malar measurement, being width of skull across zygomatic arches	9 $\frac{7}{8}$

These measurements were taken on the third day after the death of the tiger, and will probably have to be modified when the dimensions of the dry skull are noted."

These are the sort of records that are wanted, which are of value, and worth all "speaking from memory." If only Indian sportsmen would in future follow Mr Shillingford's example as closely as circumstances permit, particularly in stating how and at what period after death they measured their tigers, much would be done to settle the controversy, and the science of natural history be largely benefited.

The details that I have been able to gather present a mass of contradictory evidence, all given, with perhaps one or two exceptions, by men whose veracity no one would dream of impugning. The cause of these great discrepancies is, I think, to be traced to two causes: 1. the measurements being taken from stretched skins; 2. from their being given from memory. But "memory," though often good and accurate, is nevertheless liable to err; it plays dreadful tricks at times, and so cannot be depended on as absolutely trustworthy. With regard to the first cause of error, measuring a skin is not the same as measuring the animal when still warm. To give an instance. As I write, on the wall above me is nailed the skin of a tiger I shot in Berar. A reference to my diary shows this animal to have measured in the flesh 9 feet 3 inches (he was a hill-tiger, very stoutly built, and with a somewhat short tail). The tape put now over the skin shows it to measure 11 feet 1 inch! Rather a difference. A skin can practically be made to measure anything by stretching it, but this is not true measurement.

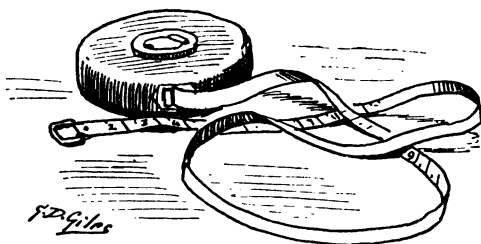
Personally I do not believe in many tigers shot within the last five-and-twenty years measuring much over 10 feet 3 inches, though, of course, exceptional monsters measuring 2 or 3 inches

more may have been obtained. The 9-foot 3-inch tiger killed by me in Berar that I have alluded to was very large, and one of 9 feet 6 inches shot by a friend during the same trip seemed a veritable monster. No doubt occasional 10-foot tigers are killed, but they are few and far between, and I do not think exist in Central India, at all events. From the records that I have quoted, readers who may be interested in the matter will be able to draw their own conclusions as to the weight and measurement of tigers.

I would make two further remarks. First, that opportunities of weighing tigers are rare, it being impossible to carry about in an ordinary shikar trip a weighing-machine that would register so great a weight as that of a tiger with precision. Secondly, that there is really only one correct method of measuring the length of any animal, and this should invariably be followed if accuracy is any object—viz., by measuring from the tip of the nose to the tip of the tail, between two sticks placed in the ground, and without following the curves of the body, directly life is extinct. This is important, as after being carried home on the pad of an elephant, a tiger's body stretches a good deal, and if carried by being tied by the legs to a pole it becomes stiff and contracts.

A rough average, including the cases of four animals said to have measured from 12 feet to 15 feet, gives an average of about 10 feet 4 inches, and if these "doubtful" cases were excluded it would be considerably less. Taking all this into consideration, I think it may be safely calculated that a tiger measuring from 9 feet 3 inches to 9 feet 6 inches is a large animal, one of 10 feet exceptionally large, and anything over 10 feet a veritable monster.¹

¹ *Vide* note to chapter iii., p. 239.



A fruitful cause of dispute.

CHAPTER IV.

POGGLE'S MISTAKE.

"YES, I will. Hang me if I don't!" said Mr Poggie, laying down his book and filling himself another B.-and-S. Having cooled his throat with that seductive beverage and lit an enormous meerschaum, he proceeded thus with his soliloquy : "If other fellows can do it, why shouldn't I? I can knock over a cock pheasant or a hare as well as most chaps; and as to coolness—bah! Well, I always was reckoned a cool hand, and I flatter myself it'll have to be a very 'cute tiger that can put me out, let him roar as he will. Oh yes, I'll have a shy at the game, for I now know all about it. I haven't read Sanderson, Sterndale, Shakespeare, Gordon - Cumming, Newall, Baker, Burton, Simson, Forsyth, Rice, &c., all for nothing! I've only just got to condense all these into one, and there you are as plain as A B C. I can easily get introductions to some old cocks

out in the gorgeous East who'll put me in the way of sport, and I think the almighty dollar will do the rest."

So saying, Mr Poggie (Mr Augustus Poggie, as he put on his cards) pulled up his gills, looked at his small self in the glass with a glance of approval, and rang the bell. His valet and factotum, Thompson, a sedate and irreproachable-looking domestic, promptly answered the summons.

"Did you ring, sir?"

"Well, yes, I did, Thompson. Shut the door. I wish to have a few words with you," replied his master, feeling somewhat uneasy as to how his henchman would receive the intelligence he was about to impart. "The fact is, Thompson," he continued, "I'm sick of knocking about at home, and am thinking of going abroad for a bit. I suppose you have no objection to accompany me?"

"Not at all, sir; but might I enquire, sir, what country you intend visiting? If it is Paris, sir, I am well acquainted with that capital. When I was with Lord Scattercash I——"

"Oh no," interrupted his master, who had heard of Lord Scattercash till he loathed the name—"oh no, much farther than France. The fact is, I want to shoot some big game—tigers

and bears and all those sort of brutes, you know—and intend going to India.”

At the prospect of being so far from his “’earth and ’ome,” as Mr Thompson subsequently expressed himself at his club, that worthy’s face fell, and he began framing excuses. “He was a married man; he was not so young as he was; he had ’eard that it was very ’ot in Hindia, and that there were all sorts of serpents and venomous reptiles there,” &c. However, by dint of a little persuasion and the promise of a handsome *douceur* the faithful Thompson was at last prevailed on to accompany his “young gentleman” on the proposed tour, upon the distinct understanding that he “should ’ave ’is meals by hisself, and not be asked to sit down with they nasty blacks.” That knotty point being settled, Gussy Poggle, as his friends called him, spent the next fortnight in a state of feverish excitement, making preparations for his expedition. He ordered a wonderful battery of rifles, guns, and revolvers; provided himself with a whole cutler’s shop of knives, spears, &c., and no end of useless paraphernalia, with which various tradesmen assured him he could not do without if he was going to India. “In fact, sir, we sell an enormous quantity of them to officers going abroad,”—and so on, and so on, till Gussy’s luggage assumed gigantic

proportions. Then he bustled about button-holing every friend and acquaintance who had ever been in India, or who had ever had even a sister, a cousin, or an aunt in that part of the British empire, at the same time overwhelming them with such a torrent of questions as fairly perplexed them, and made their lives a perfect burden. Altogether he was in a fine fuss.

There is an end to all things, however, and Mr Poggie's preparations were finally completed. His passage, as well as that of his faithful servitor, was taken on one of the P. and O. steamers for Bombay (which Presidency he had selected as his field of operations); all his museum of arms and ammunition was safely soldered up in tin cases; and after a farewell dinner to a few choice kindred spirits at his club—the Diana—one fine day in February saw our friend and Mr Thompson steaming down the Thames bound for the East.

After the first twenty-four hours, during which poor Poggie suffered all the agonies of *mal de mer*, and heartily wished himself back in his comfortable chambers in the Albany, his sporting ardour revived, and he began to look about amongst his fellow-passengers for some one from whom he might extract information and advice. Amongst others was a genial old gentleman, a

Deputy Commissioner, who, struck by the young man's unfeigned enthusiasm, lent a kindly ear to all his numerous questions. Sir Theophilus Currybhât (for such was his name) had spent the best part of his life in India, and now, having been knighted for his services, was returning to end his period of service before retiring on a well-earned pension. He had never been much of a sportsman, and so on the subject nearest Poggie's heart was not able to afford him a great amount of information; still he promised to do what he could to further his views and assist him to the best of his power. "But take my advice, my young friend," said the old man one day after one of their numerous conversations, "and don't go in for tiger-shooting by yourself. It is a dangerous game at the best of times, even to an experienced man, and if you don't take care you will probably come off second best."

"Oh yes, I know what you mean," returned Poggie, with a self-satisfied air; "but I never mean to give a tiger a chance of mauling me. You see, I've thought the matter out pretty well, and I've come to the conclusion that through an idea of my own no tiger can make good his charge if you are properly armed. I'm in the Volunteers, you know, and I've read military history a good bit, and I find that seldom or never

have cavalry been able to break into an infantry square. Now I have invented a sort of bayonet that fixes on to my rifle. My servant will also have one similarly fitted ; so then all we have to do directly we have fired at the tiger is to 'prepare to receive cavalry,' or rather tigers ! I shall be the front rank and Thompson rear rank, and it will, I fancy, have to be a pretty clever tiger that will be able to do us any harm."

At this absurd enunciation an amused smile played over the old Indian's lips, and though he failed to see the connection between sport and war (he had never read his 'Jorrock's,' you see), he merely replied drily, "Ah ! well, I hope you won't require to use cold steel, but that your bullets will do their work without your having to call your useful invention into play."

Malta, Gibraltar, the Suez Canal, and Aden had all been passed, the novel sights of which delighted our hero, and at length they reached Bombay. As soon as the ship's anchor was let go our friend was fairly staggered by the rush of coloured gentlemen ("blackies," as Mr Thompson irreverently termed them) on board. Parsees, Eurasians, touts from hotels, servants of every description and caste, exhibiting most flowery *chits* or characters (most of them—probably all—forged in the bazaar), agents of different houses,

boatmen, &c., gesticulating and shouting at the top of their voices, all combined to produce a perfect pandemonium of sound, as bewildering as it was irritating. However, thanks to his friend Sir Theophilus, Gussy escaped from all this crowd of harpies, and soon he and the faithful Thompson were on their way to the shore with the worthy civilian. Landing at the well-known Apollo Bunda, they were driven to the Byculla Hotel, and the next few days were spent in seeing all the sights and wonders of the place. Engrossing and charming as these were from their very novelty to our friend, he soon began to weary for the greater charms of the jungle. He could think and dream of nothing else but tigers. Waking, sleeping, eating, drinking, and smoking, tiger was the constant theme upon which his thoughts harped, and he was all fire and impatience to be off and beard the monarch in his den.

At last all final preparations were completed, tents, supplies, &c., bought, servants engaged, and, most important of all, a thoroughly good shikari secured. This gentleman, according to his numerous *chits*, if they were to be believed, appeared to combine all the virtues under the sun! Did not General Sir Moses Mulligatawny affirm that "the bearer, Mahomed Bux, has been in my service for a number of years. I consider

him a *first-class* shikari, honest, cool, active, intelligent, and painstaking"? Did not the noted Captain Bundook also bear testimony to his courage and abilities as a tracker? Whilst Mr Sheristadar, of the Bombay Civil Service, could hardly express in adequate terms all *he* thought of him! His get-up, too, impressed Poggie, for Mahomed Bux was a tall swaggering Mussulman, whose whiskers, dyed red and blue and standing out from his cheeks, with a fierce twirl on his moustaches, almost gave him the look of a tiger! A gorgeous red-and-gold turban, a close-fitting suit of dead-leaf-colour clothes, encircled by a broad leather belt plentifully garnished with hunting-knife, bullet-pouches, and every sort of gewgaws, all combined to make him present a decidedly sporting appearance—to a novice!

So his services at Rs. 50 *per mensem* (paid in advance), and all the Government rewards for tigers killed, were secured by Poggie, who was greatly elated at having obtained such a valuable aid to the object he had in view. Luckily for Mahomed Bux, Sir Theophilus was *not* present at the interview which ended by the great man entering Poggie's service, otherwise these pages might never have been written.

Mahomed Bux having informed his employer that he knew of a district *swarming* with tigers,

was accordingly despatched on ahead to make all necessary arrangements, and it was agreed that in a week's time he should meet Poggie at the station of Nunderipoor, report progress, and lead him to the Elysian fields of shikar. At length the long-looked-for day arrived, and after a weary journey from Bombay, Poggie reached his destination. Here he was met by the great Mahomed, who greeted him with a profound salaam and a smile of approval lurking beneath his upturned moustache. Among other accomplishments, it should be noted that Mahomed possessed, or professed to possess, a knowledge of English; so to our sportsman's inquiry of "Well, what *khubber*, Mahomed?" (Gussy had managed to pick up a few words of the vernacular), he replied with an air of conscious superiority, "*Verri* good, sar! Sahib great gentlemans—great shikari—plenty tiger-getting—I know five, six, ten tigers all waiting to eat sahib's bullets."

Poggie was delighted. He wished there and then to be led to victory. But in this he was doomed to disappointment; for, as Mahomed informed him, the tiger-ground was many *koss* distant¹—several days' march, in fact. A *koss* being equivalent to the Scotsman's "bittock," might mean any distance; but of this our friend

¹ A *koss* is about two English miles.

was naturally ignorant—happily, perhaps. He was comforted, however, by the assurance that the country he would have to traverse before reaching his happy hunting-grounds was teeming with game. Deer, antelope, partridges, hares, wild-fowl, and snipe were all waiting for the honour of being done to death by his unerring tube. With this he had perforce to be content, and was somewhat mollified by Thompson's sage remark that these "'ere hanimals" would afford him a good opportunity of testing the accuracy and shooting powers of his battery. For the next ten days, therefore, during which he progressed at the rate of about seven miles a-day, he and Thompson had great fun. They blazed away any amount of cartridges with, it must be confessed, alas! but little to show for them. Still, they greatly enjoyed themselves, and thought it very fine sport. After a while, though, Poggie began to wax impatient, and to inquire when on earth they were going to reach the tiger-ground? The astute Mahomed, however, had always an excuse ready. At such and such a spot he had known for a positive fact of three tigers; but, alas! since he had marked them down a party of sahibs had come that way, and shot them all! At another place, which *always* held tigers, a native shikari—"might dogs defile his grave!"—had shot the

animal only the previous week! At another spot the water had unfortunately dried up, and the tigers had left the neighbourhood—and so on. This, with occasional attacks of fever (pretended, of course), spun out the time pretty well.

A month had passed, and as yet Poggie had not had even the meagre satisfaction of beholding a tiger's "pug," though in his rambles he diligently searched every sandy river-bed and dusty path for the sign-manual of *Felis tigris*. Altogether he was getting rather sick of his own society and his want of success. At last, however, a ray of brightness dawned on the gloom of his despair, for one morning Mahomed appeared with a radiant countenance betokening that at length his efforts were about to be rewarded. Poggie noted the look which presaged good news, and to his impatient inquiry the shikari replied with a confident air—

"*Tiger here, sar!* Plenty bad tiger—plenty bullock-killing—that very bad tiger. Master shooting, then village people plenty blessing master. If master coming with me, I showing 'pug'; then while master having breakfast, I getting coolies to beat, and coming back two hours' time."

"Two hours," thought Poggie; "it's a deuced long time. Why can't we go at once?" he demanded.

"Please, master, no hurry-making—that bad *bandobast*. When sun getting hot, then tiger go sleep in bush, and master shooting easy."

In spite of his deferential manner there was a certain air of command in Mahomed's words, and so Poggie thought it wisest to submit, and accompany the great man to view the pugs. These were pointed out to him with an air of triumph. Tiger's tracks they certainly were; but the imprint of the mighty paw was baked hard and dry in the mud surrounding a little puddle near some scrub jungle, and was probably some weeks old. Still, it undoubtedly was a tiger's track, and though some doubts as to its freshness shot across our sportsman's brain, he kept his thoughts to himself; and to Thompson's remark of "Lor', sir, what a thunderin' big hanimal he must be!" he merely replied, "Yes, and I hope we'll have his jacket off before night. Just go and load a few fresh cartridges, Thompson; see that those bayonet-points are sharp, and put a good edge on my hunting-knife, for there is no knowing what may happen, and it is as well to be prepared."

Then he went to breakfast. The prospect of at last meeting with the object of his desire had such an effect on him, that after toying with a bit of grilled fowl, chipping an egg which he did not eat, and swallowing a couple of remarkably stiff "pegs," he rose, lit his pipe, and kept fidgeting about his camp. Eleven o'clock, twelve o'clock, one o'clock passed, and as yet no signs of either Mahomed or the beaters. At half-past one, however, that worthy was seen slowly approaching from the adjacent village, followed by some dozen coolies. Poggie was furious, and began by asking what the devil he meant, and where the beaters were?

"Master, please not getting angry. Patel [head man] this village very bad man, plenty bobbery-making, no coolies giving. What can poor man do?" replied the shikari, with folded hands and an air of mock humility.

"D—n the patel!" growled Gussy; then with a sudden air of inspiration he added, "Well, never mind; the jungle seems pretty open here, and I daresay the men you have got will be enough."

"I thinking same like master. We looking, perhaps seeing tiger in bush, then master shooting."

So it was settled that master should pot the

sleeping beauty, and forthwith the party set out armed to the teeth, rifles loaded and bayonets fixed. Some ten minutes' walk brought them to the spot where the jungle began, and a careful reconnaissance of each bush and tuft of grass was made. After proceeding some two or three hundred yards with great caution, Mahomed stopped dead short, and seizing Poggie by the arm, said in low and awestruck tones, "There, sar, tiger there!" pointing to a thick bush some fifty yards distant.

"Where?" asked Gussy, breathlessly, and now that the supreme moment had at last arrived, feeling terribly shaky. He began to wish he had not smoked so much, and to have an irresistible wish for a "nip" of something just to steady him.

"There, sar, there! Master looking close to ground, then seeing tiger's skin." Poggie and Thompson both looked hard, the latter all the time wishing himself well out of the adventure, and much inclined to make tracks back to camp.

"Ah, I see him," at length whispered Poggie, as a patch of yellow striped with black caught his eye. "Look, Thompson, don't you see? just between those two small branches. Now," he added, "we will creep up a little nearer. I will fire on my knee, and you stand behind me and

fire at the same time, when I give the word 'Fire!' and then bring your rifle down to the charge."

"Y-e-es, sir," stammered the now thoroughly alarmed Thompson, feeling all his courage oozing out at his finger-tips.

Stealthily they crept up some twenty yards closer, and then getting into position, fired their volley! There was a tremendous commotion in the bush, but the tiger gave none of those terrifying, hoarse, coughing roars that our friend had expected; moreover, he did not charge out. Reloading quickly, they poured in another volley. This time a curious moaning, choking sound, with more floundering about, was the only response. A third volley was then delivered, and again, as on each previous occasion, the dauntless two prepared to "receive tigers." But none came. A feeble, long-drawn gasp was the only sound that reached their ears; then all was still.

"Hooray!" shouted Gussy in elated tones. "He's dead!" and then and there he and Thompson proceeded to pump-handle each other and pour forth mutual congratulations, quite regardless of their respective positions as master and servant.

"Mahomed, you're a brick, and I'll give you

Rs. 50 extra for this!" said Gussy, bubbling over with excitement and delight.

"Master plenty kind; master very fine shooter. How can tiger help eating master's bullets?" replied that individual, with a low deferential salaam, as he approached from a considerable distance in the rear, whither he had wisely betaken himself.

"Now," continued Poggie, sitting down and lighting a pipe, "just you and those coolies go and pull the beast out, and we'll measure him at once. Here, Thompson, get out the tape."

Somehow or another, as Mahomed and the coolies entered the bush from which to extract the body of the tiger, a sudden fit of homesickness seemed to attack them, for after one look they promptly decamped.

"Confound the beggars! What are they about? Go and see, Thompson," said Poggie, feeling decidedly irritated.

But it flashed across the brain of that astute servitor that perhaps the tiger was not dead, and he did not quite see the joke of going all by himself to ascertain the fact. He had read in some of the volumes his master had perused with such interest, instances of apparently defunct tigers suddenly coming to life and inflicting death or

serious injury on those who dared to form a too intimate acquaintance with them. So he ventured mildly to remark, "Don't you think, sir, it might be *safer* if we was both to go together?"

Poggie saw the drift of the argument, and muttering something about "no need of being such a funk-stick," stalked off. Arrived at the spot, they stooped down and saw—oh, horror!—not a tiger, but the hoofs of a chestnut pony sticking out below the brushwood!

Alas! it was but too true. The poor animal lying in the thick shade had been mistaken for a tiger, his bright coat being somewhat of the same hue, and the sunlight flickering through the foliage added to the delusion by throwing shadows on it resembling stripes. Yes, there he lay dead as a door-nail, with the blood trickling out of four bullet-wounds. Master and servant stared blankly at each other, then slowly turned, and with a dejected air retraced their steps to camp. Meanwhile the news had spread, and shortly Poggie's tent was surrounded by a clamouring, angry crowd, headed by the Patel, demanding compensation.

The upshot of it all was that Gussy had to pay the extortionate demand of Rs. 500 for an animal worth about Rs. 20, and had not even the satis-

faction of giving Mahomed Bux the hiding he so richly deserved, for "the treasure" had made himself scarce, and was no more seen. And so Gussy returned to Bombay a sadder and wiser man, cursing all Indian sport, and tiger-shooting in particular.



Mahomed Bux.

TO MY
SISTER

CHAPTER V.

A WOMAN'S NERVE.

SOME years ago, when dining at Bullumabad with my friend Jack Belmont (the names are fictitious, but the incident veracious), I noticed that his wife wore, on a broad band of black velvet that encircled her throat, a brooch made of panther-claws. It was a *chef-d'œuvre* of the native jeweller's art. The broad parts of the two claws of which it was composed were united with a very fairly modelled representation of a snarling panther's head. The ears were laid back viciously, whilst the eyes, made from two really good diamonds from Golconda, flashed and sparkled in the light of the dinner-table. Somehow my attention was riveted, my curiosity aroused; for I felt sure that brooch had a history, and more than once I felt as if I were staring almost rudely at my hostess. Dinner at last was over. We had touched on all the latest

European news, fashions, and station scandal, had wished ourselves back in the old country (ah, how often since then have we wished ourselves back in the "Shiny"!), and at last, on Mrs Belmont's rising, we lit our cheroots and adjourned to long chairs, the verandah, and the cool night air. In masculine confidence we discussed sundry topics, debated whether old General Chutnee would get the vacant brigade, agreed that the way young Spooner carried on with pretty Mrs Chignon was *really too bad*, touched on home politics, voted that India was going to the dogs, and so *ad infinitum*. At last the subject of shikar cropped up.

Here was my chance. I had always been an inveterate enthusiast—call me maniac, if you like—on all matters connected with sport, and the opportunity was too good to be lost, so I began.

"I say, old fellow, that was an awfully neat brooch your *Mem-sahib* had on to-night. Did you shoot the *jānwār* (animal)?"

Belmont smiled, and a grim look of satisfaction overspread his rugged, sun-tanned face. He was no Adonis, but a good, hard-looking Englishman, a type of the men who have made England what it is.

"Yes, I did," he remarked slowly, as he puffed

a thin cloud of blue smoke from his "Trichy," and gazed up at the blue, star-spangled sky.

I knew from his manner something was coming. His thoughts were evidently far away, and it would not do to bring him back again from those charming realms of the past too abruptly, and so I puffed on in silence.

It is hard work waiting sometimes when you are impatient, but I knew my friend, and knew, moreover, that he hated being hurried. He was, I felt sure, raking up all the details of the incident that, in his mind at least, were fraught with important results, and so I curbed my impatience.

Certainly, if surroundings influence us at all, I had everything in my favour. Not a leaf was stirring; the moon was breaking through a bank of dark clouds, touching up with its silvery light the dome of a distant mosque. The still cool air, after a refreshing shower, was heavy with the scent of jasmine and the large convolvulus-shaped moon-flower that twined up the supporting pillars of the verandah, and turned its white, full-shaped blossoms to the planet after which it was named. An odour, not unpleasant, of burning *bois de vache* (the fuel in common use amongst natives in India) came from the servants' lines; whilst away in the distance the plaintive wail of a

wandering jackal, the neigh of a horse, the bark of dogs, and the strains of a regimental band blended not inharmoniously.

Belmont smoked on. At last, when his cheroot had burnt almost down to his lips, he roused himself, and turning towards me, queried, "Would you like to know the story connected with the 'scuffle'?"

"Of course I would, old chap; you know any 'scuffle' has charms for me," I replied.

"All right—you shall," he returned; "but let us get something to drink first, and light up again. Here, 'boy'! *peg aur ag lao*" (*Anglicè*, "bring brandy and soda and fire"). A gulp or two of the iced fluid, that gurgled gratefully down our throats, a good cheroot under way, and then we composed ourselves in the respective positions of reciter and listener.

After a few preliminary draws at his cheroot, Belmont thus told his story:—

"Some ten years ago I was shikaring down in the Taindwah District, and one day came across old Jackson, who was the collector there, and, as you know, the most hospitable fellow in the world, who was out in camp with his daughter Livy. Hearing that I had had but poor sport during my trip, he would take no denial, but insisted on my being his guest, and going with him to some noted

tiger-jungles which he had kept quiet, and where he said I should be certain to have sport. You may be sure I did not refuse, though for some time I doubted if it would be wise on my part to accept. You will wonder why I had even a transient doubt about closing with such a good offer, but the fact was I had known Livy for some two years; and, to tell you the honest truth, I had been very hard hit right under the liver-wing. But, I argued, what was the good of a poor subaltern indulging in love's young dream when he had not very well the means to keep himself, much less a wife? So I did what I thought wisest, eschewed the Jacksons' society, and thought I was safe. But, as you see, Fate ordained otherwise, and you, old man, will allow that I have had no reason to quarrel with her decrees. However, to resume. We had been kept hanging about for some time at a place where the only sport to be got was with black-buck and chikara—very good sport in its way, but not the sort of shikar one makes a hundred-and-seventy-mile march to obtain—so I naturally began to be a little impatient, all the more as I felt that that little witch Livy was beginning to reassert her influence over me, an influence which I had flattered myself I had conquered. We two went

for long rides every day, and shot black-buck together. You know what a good shot she is, and I must confess the way she used to bowl over black-buck running at a hundred and fifty yards, with her little rifle, increased my admiration of her. Sketching, reading, and chess whiled away other hours of the day, and I felt that matters were coming to a climax when one day old Jackson said at breakfast—

“‘Belmont, Kureem’—that was his shikari, and a first-rate fellow—‘has just brought in *khubber* of a panther in some sugar-cane fields about two miles from here. I cannot accompany you, as I must go over to Dongergaon to settle a boundary dispute; but you might go and have a shot, and Livy will ride out with you. I have made all arrangements, and the beaters will be ready whenever you give the order.’

“Livy looked at me across the table, and as her responsive glance met mine, I knew that she was every whit as keen for the ‘scuffle’ as I was. At last old Jackson went off, after particularly enjoining on Livy that she was to keep well out of harm’s way. At three o’clock, after tiffin, we started, and after a two-mile canter, enlivened by having to jump two or three thorn-and-straw rope-bound fences and a nullah, we arrived at

the scene of action, and found Kureem and the beaters awaiting us. It was not exactly the sort of place one would have expected to find a panther, as for some distance the whole country was under cultivation; sugar-cane, jowaree, dhāl, and cotton-fields succeeded each other with monotonous regularity, and unless there existed some unknown but special attraction, it looked a most unlikely-looking spot to find any of the big cats. Kureem, however, was confident, and, to prove his assertion, pointed out to me the comparatively fresh tracks of the panther in a dry irrigation rivulet that led into a sugar-cane field. I was posted in an open space that divided two fields of sugar-cane, with Livy on her Arab pony well out of harm's way in the open beyond. The beat began, and before long I just caught a glimpse of the panther as she flashed across the open, but rather too far to risk a shot. Stopping the beat, I called Kureem, and after 'ringing' the small patch of sugar-cane into which we knew the panther had gone, and assuring ourselves that she had not quitted it, I went to take up a new position. On my way I was joined by Livy, and nothing would suit her but that she should come and join me. In vain I protested, and urged that her father's last injunctions to her

were to keep out of harm's way. 'Oh, never mind Daddles,' she replied; 'I know *you* will shoot straight.' The implied admiration of my correct aim and wilful woman won the day. I gave in, and dismounting, Livy accompanied me. The spot where I decided to take my stand was behind a thick béhr bush about twenty yards from the sugar-canes, and between the growing crop and it the ground dipped down in a sort of hollow. The bush, or rather bushes, were somewhat thick, and about up to my chest in the highest part, with lower scattered growth around, and we took up our positions in a slight opening, where we could command a good view. I ought, perhaps, to tell you that Livy had hooked up her habit, and had armed herself with her little rifle, which had wrought such execution amongst the black-buck, and was standing a few yards behind me.

"The beaters came on, and we could see the tall sugar-cane swaying about as they forced their way through it. But not a sign of the panther. Nearer and nearer the beaters approached, kicking up no end of a hullabaloo, and, I must acknowledge, keeping line wonderfully. I could almost see the foremost, and thinking the panther must have either lain close or slipped

out unseen, I turned to Livy and said, 'What a sell!' The words were scarcely out of my mouth when there was a rustle at my very feet, and I caught sight of a fulvous-spotted hide gliding past me almost within touching distance. Of course I ought to have stood still, but I was keen, and I felt I must have a shot somehow ; so, forgetting Livy's presence, and without putting my rifle to my shoulder, I 'fluffed off.' As I stepped back to get clear of the smoke, my spur caught in one of the little bushes, and I tumbled over, to find the next moment about 200 lb. weight of panther-flesh on top of me. What my sensations were I cannot accurately describe, beyond stating that they were uncommonly unpleasant, and that I felt in a deuce of a rage. The brute was lying across me ; her left fore-paw had pinned my right arm to my side, whilst she had her teeth fixed in my shoulder, with my left arm under her, and her snarling vicious face so close to mine that I could smell her fetid breath. One desperate effort I made to kick her off, then there was a sharp report, and the brute tumbled off me. Scrambling up, my first thought was of Livy, so imagine my horror to find her on the ground, with the panther apparently chawing her up ! Picking up my rifle, I fired the left barrel



"The brute was lying across me."

into the brute, and then everything swam round before my eyes, and I fell down faint from loss of blood. I must have soon come to, however, for when I opened my eyes Livy was bathing my head with water and washing my wounds.

“‘Thank God, you are all right, darling!’ I ejaculated, and then my strength seemed to return as she said, with the tears standing in her eyes—

“‘Yes, yes, I am all right, but we *must* have that panther. Can you go on?’

“By Jove! old man, weak and shaken as I was, the girl’s pluck put new life into me, and I vowed I would kill that panther if it cost me my life. Well, to make a long story short, I staggered up and found that after leaving me the panther had rushed at Livy, knocked her over, and got hold of the folds of her habit, which was torn to shreds, but without injuring her. Then when I had fired she had let go, and hooked it into a small, rocky nullah. Here we found her, very sick, and I gave her the *coup de grâce*.

“When we got back to camp, and the excitement had worn off, I became very ill. Fever set in; I became delirious, and for a fortnight hovered between life and death. But I have a pretty

sound constitution, and, thanks to Livy's nursing, I got all right; and of course the end of it was that what I had so long put off came to pass; I proposed and was accepted. Old Jackson hummed and hawed a great deal, pointed out to me the danger I had subjected his daughter to, and for a long time was very obdurate. But Livy got her way in the end, and we were married. Soon after, thanks to my father-in-law's interest, I got a good appointment, and that led to the one I now hold. Altogether you will admit that it was not a bad day for me when I had that scuffle, though it nearly had a tragic termination, and I have never ceased being thankful that it gave me the chance of being the husband of a heroic woman. There, old man, that is the story of the brooch, which was my first present to Livy. Now come along and have a cup of coffee, and the *Mem-sahib* shall tell you her version of it."

This the *Mem-sahib* did, and after a while got out, for my edification, the habit riven and torn by the panther's teeth and claws. It had, in truth, been a wonderful escape, and spoke volumes for what a woman's nerve and coolness will do at times under trying circumstances.

Many summers have passed since the tale was

told me ; and the heads of both Jack Belmont and his wife are whitening ; but when they look at that little trinket, the former, I will be bound, says in his heart it was a lucky day for him when he found out what woman's nerve will do at times,



The little trinket.

CHAPTER VI.

CHITAL-SHOOTING IN THE SEWALIK HILLS.

THOUGH there are many descriptions of game in India whose pursuit affords more excitement than that of the chital, or spotted deer (*Axis maculatus*), there are few that are more charming to a sportsman of a contemplative turn of mind, or that bring back pleasanter recollections of happy days passed amid the solitary grandeur and sylvan beauties of its hills and jungles. Strolling quietly along, with eye and ear on the *qui vive*, sights and sounds are noted and observed that, in the greater noise and excitement of a beat, are apt to pass unnoticed. Then, too, an you be successful, what a source of inward congratulation you possess, knowing that by your own individual exertions, and general knowledge of woodcraft, you have circumvented and shot a shy and wary animal, and added handsome trophies in the shape of skins and horns to your

collection! Yes, they are, and always must be, very dear, those memories of bygone days, now, alas! gone from me, and only "on memory's tablets traced"; and though years have passed, the feeling of the keen morning air and the smell of the jungle seem to come back to me with undying freshness.

In the days of which I write the Sewalik Hills afforded a grand field for this individual sport. These low hills bound one side of the valley of Dehra Doon, in the North-West Provinces of India, and extend in a westerly direction from beyond the Mohun Pass to the town of Hurdwar, on the Ganges. Rising to an altitude of some 2000 feet, every variety of ground presents itself to the ambitious sportsman, whilst game of all sorts—elephant, tiger, bear, panther, sambhur, chital, muntjack, pea-fowl, jungle-fowl, black partridge, &c.—afforded a choice enough to content even the keenest and most exacting shikari. The tops of these hills form in many places table-lands of large extent, dotted at intervals with forest-trees, whilst their slopes are seamed with numerous gorges, whose sides, clothed with bamboo, béhr, and numerous other trees and shrubs, offer splendid cover for game of all sorts. On the Doon side they merge into vast swampy grass-plains, intersected with

brooks and streams, and dotted about with timber and impenetrable patches of thorny cane-brake. On the other, or southern side, stretches for some miles a dense jungle of béhr, baubul-trees, and bushes, till at last it gives way to a vast cultivated plain, where luxuriant fields of sugar-cane, millet, maize, and wheat attest the fertility of the soil. Altogether, the Sewalik Hills were very happy hunting-grounds.

With this preface, I will proceed to give a slight sketch of the animal we are about to pursue, and then detail the results of some days I had in this sporting Elysium. I trust I may not be accused of repetition if I quote the description of chital I gave in a former work entitled 'Shikar Sketches.' Here it is:—

“The colour of the chital, or spotted deer, much resembles the fallow-deer, only that it is far more vivid and brilliant, and the whole shape and bearing of the animal is more game-looking. Its colour is a bright chestnut, tinged with red, with a black, or very dark-brown, stripe running down the back. The tail is generally rather long and somewhat bushy. There is, however, a very wide and marked difference between the chital and the fallow-deer, and that is in the shape of their horns; for, whilst a fallow-deer's horns are *palmated*, a

chital's are exactly the reverse. They have, as a rule, only six points, but I have shot them with seven and even eight. The female, or hind chital, is of a much lighter build than the stag. She is also lighter in colour, and the white spots are not so well developed as in the stag. Chital are generally found in herds of from ten to forty or fifty, and I have seen herds which must have numbered over a hundred. They love shade and covert, and water is indispensable to them. . . . During the heat of the day they lie up in thick covert, and sally forth towards evening to feed and drink. They may generally be found up to about ten o'clock, when the sun begins to assert its power, and again about four o'clock in the afternoon. When alarmed, the chital utters a short, sharp bark, and this often betrays the presence of a tiger or a panther to the sportsman."

With this prelude I will turn to the pages of my old battered Shikar Diary, and from its faded pages evoke the description of a few good days I had after these graceful deer with a brother ensign, one of that honoured rank that no longer exists.

May 3.—MacLeod and I having obtained ten days' leave, despatched our kit to Kikri, near Hurdwar. Mac started in the morning, but I

was delayed on court-martial duty, and could not get away till 3.30 P.M., by which time it was pretty warm. Forbes Gordon lent me a pony to ride half-way, and I did the remaining fourteen miles on Placid Joe, who belied his name sadly by trying to bolt twice. Got into camp at 6.30—not bad, going twenty-eight miles in three hours. Found Mac had been out and had had a shot at a muntjack, or barking deer, but missed. He saw no end of chital, but couldn't get a shot. Before dinner had a swim in the Ganges, which was delightfully clear and cold, a striking contrast to the Ganges Canal at Roorkee.

4th.—Out at daylight. Walked for an hour without seeing anything but a doe sambhur. Then got a touch of fever, so came back to camp and lay up till evening, when I had another swim, which, on the kill or cure principle, put me all right! Mac had shots at chital, but didn't bag any. Sent on kit to Colepore.

5th.—Marched to Colepore, six miles. We have engaged the services of one Juggoo by name as shikari. He vows he will show us plenty of game. Hope he will. On the way here Mac had shots at chital, but did not bag any. *En route*, and near camp, I came on the freshly killed body of a young sambhur, and

Juggoo swore he saw a tigress and two cubs sneaking away over the hills. There were fresh footprints all about, and I certainly caught sight of some animal moving through the jungle, but could not be certain what it was. I ran forward on to a little spur that jutted out from the main range of hills, and in the direction where Juggoo said he saw the animals; but when I reached the top nothing was visible except a lot of monkeys in a great state of commotion, and chattering like maniacs. The gorge below the spur on which I was standing was thickly clothed with bamboo and grass, and from it I heard the sharp bark of a chital, which denoted that a tiger was about. It would have been folly attempting further pursuit, and as Juggoo said the tigers were sure to return to the kill, I left him behind to construct a couple of *méchans* over it, whilst I went on to camp to breakfast. About twelve o'clock Juggoo turned up, and reported all ready. We accordingly started for the scene of action, and took our places—myself in a tree on the side of the hill, about twenty yards from the kill, and Mac in another tree growing out of the edge of the cane-brake, and immediately overlooking the dead sambhur. Here we sat like two Patiences on two monuments for six mortal hours, but nothing more

formidable than a few pea-fowl and jungle-fowl appeared. Once or twice we heard a chital bark near us, showing that the tigers were in the vicinity; but whether the brutes winded us, or what, I know not. At any rate, we never saw them. Just before we had decided on returning to camp, cramped with our long vigil, and disgusted at wasting the whole afternoon for nothing, we were startled by a tremendous fusilade in the direction of our tents. On arriving in camp we found that a herd of elephants had come down to a stream close by to drink, and had so frightened our respective bearers, Ram Deen and Moriar, who were more at home in the pleasant *purlieus* of the bazaar than in the jungle, that they had blazed away about twenty cartridges out of our shot-guns in order to scare away the pachyderms! Annoyed at this disturbance of the jungle and useless waste of ammunition, we administered a serious lecture to those gentlemen on the heinousness of their crime, and the baneful quality of cowardice. As the lecture was accompanied by a slight physical demonstration in the shape of a sound cuffing, we trust it will bear good fruit.

6th.—It has!—to a certain extent only, it is true, but still some; for about 2 A.M. we were woke up by a great hullabaloo, and our affrighted

domestics informed us in tremulous accents that "*Hathi pher aya, sahib*" ("The elephants have come again, sir"). We could hear them plainly enough, but as it was too dark to see, we went to roost again. Started at daylight. Mac tried the hills with Juggoo, but got nothing, though he saw several chital and sambhur. I tried the lower ground, taking an intelligent coolie with me. We walked for some time, seeing nothing but a hind sambhur and a couple of barking-deer. At last, on approaching a little nullah, my attendant gave me to understand that this was a likely spot to find chital, who were in the habit of resorting thither to lick a saline deposit that existed on one of the banks; so taking off my boots, I crept silently forward and peered through the bushes. The coolie was right, for in the bed of the nullah five chital were collected—a nice stag and four hinds. The stag was licking the reddish-coloured earth on the bank, one hind was lazily scratching her neck with her hind-foot, whilst the others were loitering about, occasionally reaching up to nibble the young shoots of some bushes that overhung the bank, taking a bite here and there at some extra-tempting piece of grass or foliage. The stag was only some eighty yards off, but from his position did not offer a good shot, standing, as he was, only three-

quarters on, without exposing his shoulders. I waited some moments, but as he then began to move from me, I gave a sharp bark, imitating as nearly as I could the cry of a chital. This brought them all to attention. Up went their heads, and they cocked their ears, the stag whisking round and sniffing the air. I had him covered, and as soon as I got a clear sight I fired. The smoke hung for an instant in the moist swampy ground, and I could not see the effect of my shot for a moment, and when I could, to my disappointment all that presented itself to my vision was a fleeting glimpse of five white tails and dappled hides bobbing away through the jungle in the distance. When my intelligent coolie came up to me with my boots, a broad grin suffused his ugly countenance, and he remarked, in tones of satisfaction, "*Golee kaya, Huzoor*" ("He has eaten the bullet, your Highness"). I thought *not!* but an examination of the spot where the stag had been standing proved the man was right; for some ten yards farther on we found a drop of blood, then another, and then a well-defined blood-trail, with large splashes where the stag had brushed through grass and bushes in his passage. Some half-mile farther the blood began to decrease, and soon we came on a quantity of undigested grass,

evidently vomited by the stag, and showing that he was very sick. Another two hundred yards, and we came on him lying stone-dead. A nice stag with six points, a handsomely shaped head, and a beautiful glossy skin. Returned to camp much pleased. In the evening we both went out together. Saw a few barking-deer, at which we did not fire, and revisited the kill of yesterday. Found it nearly all eaten, and tiger-tracks all round; but it is hopeless trying to beat in this enormous jungle, and Juggoo, as well as ourselves, knows nothing of the *bando-bast*, so we must wait and gain experience. This night Juggoo shot a porcupine by waiting at the mouth of its earth. We intend sampling *côtelettes de porc-épic* for dinner to-morrow.

7th.—Out on the hills with Juggoo at daylight. As I topped a little spur close to camp, a young stag sambhur jumped up. I fired a snap-shot, and bowled him over. Sorry I did so, for he proved to have but a poor head, and his horns were in velvet. However, Juggoo got up in time to do the *hallal*, so his flesh will be acceptable in camp. On reaching the plateau at the top of the hills, we walked some time without seeing anything, till at last I caught sight of a nice herd of chital browsing some distance off. Sinking the hill, we made a long *détour*

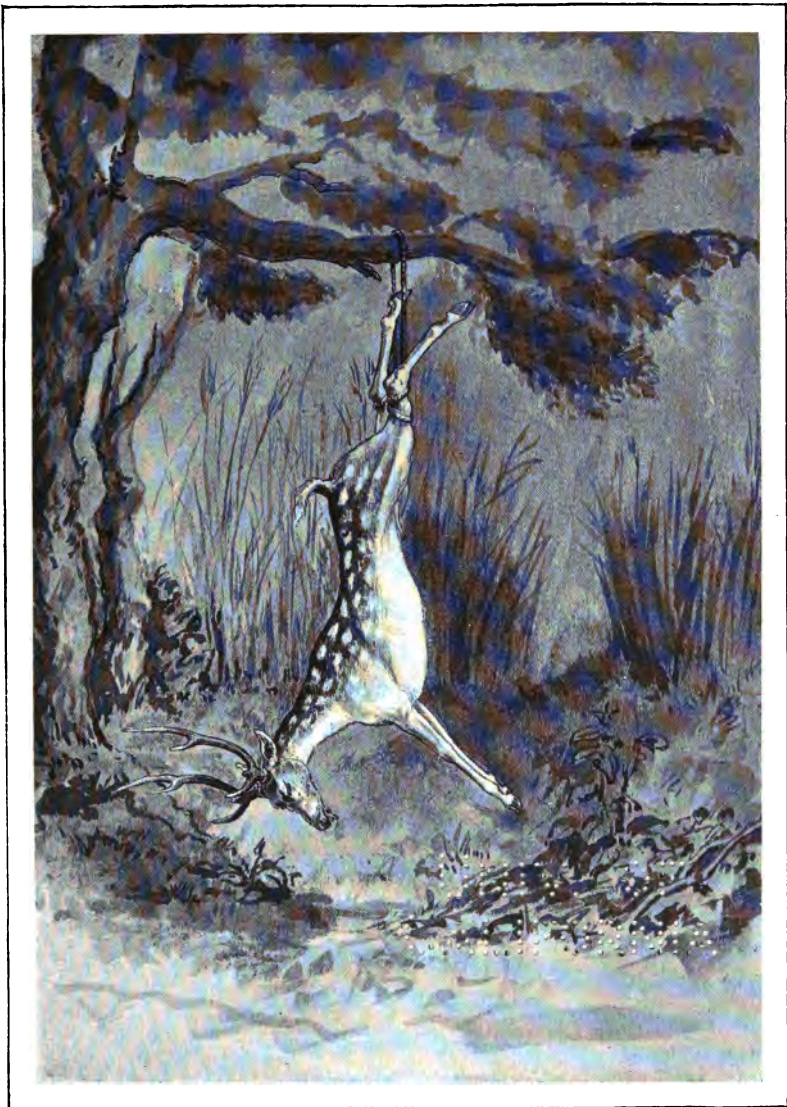
to cut them off. Juggoo did well, taking me up to within 120 yards of the herd, which contained some nice stags. They were on the *qui vive*, however, and bolted as soon as I peeped over a boulder of rock on the edge of the plateau. I fired at the best stag, which brought up the rear, and hit him, for we tracked him by his blood for some distance; but he got on to rocky ground, the blood ceased, and we eventually had to give him up. On return to camp found Mac, as usual, had been unlucky; but he had shot a peacock and a black partridge close to camp. In the middle of the day I took my gun and went for a stroll round the tents, thinking I might get a jungle-fowl or two. I had not gone a couple of hundred yards when out of a patch of grass a barking-deer jumped up at my very feet, and I bowled him over with a charge of No. 5 shot. He had a good head. What a demoniacal expression these little beasts have, with their projecting tusk-like teeth and the deep dark furrows that run down their foreheads!

In the evening we both went out to a spot about a mile distant, where the grass was springing up after a jungle-fire, and where Juggoo said we should be certain to see chital, as it was a favourite feeding-ground. On ar-

rising we found numerous fresh droppings, which proved the truth of his assertion. Ensconcing ourselves amid some béhr-bushes, we awaited the advent of our quarry; nor had we long to wait, for soon a nice herd, containing about sixteen chital, hove in sight, leisurely wending their way to the pasture. It was a pretty sight, and we watched with interest the motions of the lord of the herd as he punted any loitering lady of his harem, and kept the younger stags in order when they evinced a disposition to be on too familiar terms with him or any of the hinds. There was one other fairish stag, and this one we decided I should fire at, whilst Mac, in consideration of his bad luck, was to try conclusions with the big stag. On they came, quite unsuspecting of danger, till within some seventy yards of our position, when the leading hind stopped and gave an impatient stamp with her fore-foot. This was our moment, and we both fired. My stag fell to the shot, got up, staggered on a bit, and then rolled over. Mac hit his stag, but too far back, and he went on. We tracked him till dark, and then reluctantly had to give up. We may find him to-morrow, however. *N.B.*—*Côtelettes de porc-épic* are excellent, and served with sauce made from the berries of the béhr-

bush, resemble the most delicate pork. *Mem.*—To instruct Juggoo to procure another *aussitôt que possible*. Sent the camp on to Kansaro, sixteen miles by road. We intend to shoot our way there by a shorter route over the hills in the morning.

8th.—Both started at daylight, and after going about three miles, separated. I saw a few sambhur—one splendid stag amongst them, but I could not manage to get a shot at him. He was too leary, and I would not risk a snap-shot, hoping I might come on him again, which, alas! I did not. Some two miles farther on I came on a solitary stag chital bearing a splendid head. He was loitering along, browsing occasionally, and rubbing his antlers against a tree. I followed him patiently, skipping from tree to tree behind him, in the hopes of getting a favourable shot, till some abominable monkeys spotted me when I was within 150 yards, and alarmed him. I had to take the shot, such as it was, and—missed! Better this, though, than wounding and losing him, as I probably should have had I not killed him outright, as Juggoo is no great hand at tracking. After this I saw chital innumerable, but did not manage to get a shot. They were all too wide-awake, and the jungle so open, that I would not risk



"Our larder."

to wind
around

a long shot on the chance of failure. Close to camp, however, I got a chance, and got in at a fair stag, a six-pointer, dropping him in his tracks. On reaching camp, promptly indulged in a "gin-and-tonic," that most admirable drink; for I had had a long tramp, and, *ergo*, deserved a "long drink." Arrived in camp, I found it pitched in a most picturesque spot below a rugged hill, the slopes of which were clothed with clumps of bamboo and occasional forest-trees. Beyond stretched a verdant glade, with a little brook purling along a pebbly bottom, most suggestive of trout and home. Altogether a charming spot. I found Mac's luck had at last turned. He had bagged a hind chital out of a large herd that he had come across. He had missed the stag and killed this hind, which was immediately behind him. She had a lovely skin, and proved a yeld hind, so her demise was not to be regretted. He had also bagged a barking-deer and a green pigeon with his shot-gun when close to camp, so our larder is well stocked. We both went out in the evening to another grazing-place; but the Fates were averse, both of us missing good chances—at least within a hundred yards. My chance was at one of the best stags I have yet seen, and I feel inclined to "put my head in a bag" accord-

ingly. *Mirabile dictu*, it is very cold, and we are glad to sit round a fire after dinner.

9th.—A real good day. I started before daylight with Juggoo for a salt-lick that he knew of some three miles distant. It lay between two spurs that projected out from the main range. The ground on either side of the spurs that formed the little valley between them was comparatively bare; only a tree or clump of bamboos standing here and there amongst the boulders of rock that clothed the sides. The indentation—for the miniature valley was little else—was covered with short sweet grass, now just shooting up after a jungle-fire. It ran up for some 300 yards, and then terminated abruptly in a great slab of rock that rose sheer up some forty feet, thus forming a regular *cul-de-sac*. At the base of this rock, from beneath which trickled a tiny rivulet, was the salt-lick. Creeping cautiously up to the summit of one of the spurs before it was yet light, we ensconced ourselves behind an old dead stump, and drawing a few branches around to screen us more effectually, awaited the turn of events. Juggoo said we should not have to wait long. Nor had we. Soon the twitter of birds and a faint flush over the snow-clad peaks of the Himalayas—miles away, but still distinctly visible—announced the

coming dawn. Then a flood of rosy light burst like magic over the distant hill-tops, melting gradually into a deep golden colour, and soon old Sol rose in all his glory, causing every drop of moisture on grass and leaf to sparkle like diamonds, lighting up the valley of the Doon below us, and dispelling the heavy banks of mist that hung over it like a pall. Lost in the beauties of the scene, I was in dreamland, when I was recalled to a sense of where I was by Juggoo clutching my arm convulsively, and the one whispered word, "*Ata*" ("They are coming"). Looking down the little valley, I saw a sight that would gladden the heart of any sportsman—to wit, a very large herd of chital slowly wending their way up. I don't think there could have been less than a hundred—stags, hinds, and fawns all included. On they trooped, browsing as they came; the fawns skipping about and playing with all the innocence of youth. They seemed quite to fill the little gorge, and the rear was brought up by a splendid stag. The broad black stripe down his back and the deep colour of his coat betokened age and the reverence due to years, a fact of which his companions seemed fully aware; for ever and anon he would dive into the throng, and administer a reproof to some erring member with a sharp prod of his

sweeping antlers. I confess I was bewitched at the sight, and could not make up my mind what to do. As they made their way up, the leaders reached the salt-lick, and indulged in their morning tonic; whilst others lay down, and some browsed or quenched their thirst at the little stream preparatory to settling down for the day. At last Juggoo's repeated whispers of "*Maro, sahib*" ("Shoot, sir"), recalled me to a sense of what I was out for—viz., to shoot chital, and not to gaze at them with the eyes of a visionary; so, selecting the big stag, as he happened to be nearest me, I took a careful aim at his shoulder and fired. Down he went. At the report the herd started and huddled up. The left barrel accounted for another stag before they had realised their danger. Huddled up in bewilderment, they gave me time to cram in a couple more cartridges, knock over a third stag, and miss a fourth. The astonished animals now all dashed up towards the sheet of rock I have previously alluded to, which of course arrested their progress, giving me time to put in a couple more shots, which resulted in the death of a brace of hinds. They then turned and scattered, some racing past below me, others scrambling up the opposite spur, whilst two fawns came straight up to my post, and passed

within a few yards of me. I had time for a couple more shots at a stag; but I was so bewildered by this concourse of deer flying in every direction, that I only wounded, and eventually lost him, and soon they were all out of sight. Needless to say, I was delighted; and as to Juggoo, he said he had never seen such shikar, and in his own estimation rose considerably. It was a curious sight, and a good bag; but still I would sooner have bagged one good chital after a careful stalk than have shot twenty thus. On return to camp found Mac very despondent. He had had several shots at chital and barking-deer, but missed them all: he had, however, picked up the skull and horns of a magnificent stag chital, evidently killed by a tiger. This he vowed he would say he had *shot*, and bound me to secrecy on the subject when we rejoined the regiment! In the evening I went for a stroll round camp with my shot-gun, and knocked over a barking-deer (*Cervulus aureus*) and a green pigeon; then sat down, smoked a pipe, sketched, and thought generally on the delights of jungle-life, and this locality in particular.

10th.—Went out over the low ground in the morning. Saw a good many chital, also a hog-deer (*Axis porcinus*); but they were very wary, and only gave me snap-shots, all of which I

missed. Mac bagged a hind chital, and his spirits have risen considerably. In the evening we both went out. Mac bagged a barking-deer, at which he said he made a wonderful shot, as it was standing end on gazing at him 150 yards distant. I expect he wants some judging-distance drill, as a barking-deer at 100 yards, in the position he describes, is a small object to hit, and dear old Mac is *not* a good shot. I saw nothing, with the exception of a lame boar; and as pig-sticking here is an impossibility, I knocked him over with a view to testing the delicacy known as "soused countenance." On the way home, when it was nearly dark, heard a tiger kill a chital in some heavy grass-jungle. At least, from Juggoo's abject funk and the sounds, I gather that this is what took place, though of course I could see nothing.

11th.—Out at daylight. Tried the hills for sambhur. Saw a good stag and five hinds, but could not get near them. Had a long shot at some chital, but missed. Descending a narrow gorge on our way home we heard an awful row, as if two gigantic tom-cats were "having it out" on the tiles. Juggoo said it was panthers fighting or love-making! Anyhow, he was in an awful funk, and strongly disapproved of my going to see the cause of the row. I insisted,

however, on his accompanying me, which he did with evident reluctance ; and when we were near the spot, he developed, *more nativo*, a nervous cough, which spoilt all chance of our seeing the combatants. The fresh pugs, where a scuffle, amatory or otherwise, had taken place, were, however, plainly visible, and we followed the tracks some distance, but lost them amid a mass of boulders. In the evening I went out over the low ground, and soon came on a fine stag chital. Creeping up, I accomplished a most successful stalk by taking advantage of clumps of bamboos and gigantic ant-hills, some of which were at least six feet high. I got within sixty yards of the unsuspecting stag and bowled him over. As he lay kicking about on the ground I laid down my rifle, and running in seized him by the horns with my left hand, whilst I felt for my hunting-knife with my right. This seemed to revive him, and he struggled up, floundering to such an extent that I had to take hold of his other antler. A tremendous scuffle then ensued, the stag getting on his feet and butting at me, whilst he struck out viciously with his fore-feet, catching me a sharp blow on the ankle, cutting right through the leather of my boot and into my flesh. Such was his strength that I several times nearly had to let go ; but Juggoo came up just in time, and

drawing my knife from its sheath promptly ended his struggles. As I limped home a nice herd of chital cantered across a glade in the jungle about 120 yards in front of me. The stag bringing up the rear seemed to be lagging a bit, and to exhibit the appearance of being a wounded animal; so, aiming well in front of him, I fired and knocked him over. He proved a fine beast, a six-pointer, with a lovely glossy hide. On examining him I found a bullet-wound in his neck, very fresh and just healing over, so presume he must be a stag I wounded on the 8th or previously. Mac also went out in the evening to wait at a favourite grazing-place, but, feeling very hot, sat down under a tree and went fast asleep! The intelligent coolie who accompanied him said a fine herd of chital came, but the sahib made so much noise (I presume he snored) that they ran away! On nearing camp, Juggoo spotted a jungle-fowl going to roost on a bare tree some sixty or seventy yards distant, and wanted me to fire at it with my rifle. This I declined, but said he might have a shot. Getting behind a tree and steadying the rifle against its trunk, after aiming for about five minutes, he fired, and to my utter astonishment down flopped the jungle-cock *minus* his head, which had been cut clean off. Of course it was an awful fluke,

and I told the lucky marksman so, at which he seemed somewhat offended, intimating that such a feat was one he could perform any day. It was very cold to-night, so we had a fire in front of the tent, with the *khanats* (sides) drawn up round the fire, and the table placed within the recess thus formed, sitting ourselves inside the tent. The *menu* of our dinner to-night deserves to be recorded as proof of what the jungle can afford in the shape of good grub: Hare-soup, pork-chops, sauce *aux fruits de béhr*, stewed pigeons, roast jungle-fowl, brain curry, chital-kidney toast, lemon-pudding.

12th. — Both went out at daylight after sambhur. I only saw one hind; but on the way back I saw a nice stag chital, with four points, grazing on the slope of a spur. I was on the opposite spur, and the distance across must have been a good 250 yards; but I was tired of walking, and would not take the trouble to stalk him; so, lying down and resting my rifle on a slab of rock, I took a careful aim at his shoulder and fired. To my astonishment he tumbled over and came rolling down the hill. He was shot through the loins, and so paralysed. Juggoo soon put him out of his misery. His horns, though, alas! were in velvet, a fact I was precluded from ascertaining owing to the distance.

A lucky shot, but a decided fluke. In the evening I had a shot at a good stag chital as he was standing knee-deep in a little stream, but missed him shamefully. Mac got nothing. Sent on kit to Purdoni.

13th.—Started up the hills at daylight, intending to shoot our way over them to Purdoni. After going about two miles together we separated, and soon after, whilst forcing my way through some thick young bamboos, a beast jumped up in front of me. I let fly without seeing what it was, and then, to my regret, found I had shot a hind sambhur. Juggoo and I soon had her skin off, and hanging up the carcass in a tree for Mr Juggoo's future consumption, we rolled up the tongue and marrow-bones in the hide, and continued on our way. We had a ten-mile tramp in front of us, and I was going carelessly along the Hurdwar road when my attention was arrested by a single whispered word from Juggoo, "*Chank*" (*Anglicè*, a stag chital). Looking in the direction in which he pointed, I saw a beauty rubbing his antlers against a tree in the jungle not 100 yards from us. Sinking down, I crawled into a ditch that bordered the road, and, steadying my elbow on the bank, got a lovely shot. The result was that the best stag of the trip was added to my bag. He was a seven-pointer, with the velvet nearly

off his horns, only a few dry strips adhering to them. Taking off his hide and head, we tramped on, and reached Purdoni at two o'clock, hot, tired, and dusty. A mussuck of water and a good tiffin of marrow-bones and chupaties, however, soon refreshed me. Mac had had several shots, but got nothing. He had come a short cut over the hills, "a frightfully precipitous route, where I had in places to hang on by my eyelids," as he described it. After rewarding Juggoo and the intelligent coolie suitably, we mounted our tats for the moonlight ride back to Roorkee, which place we reached about 10.45 P.M., and so ended a very enjoyable and charming trip.

Such was the result of one out of the many trips I had in the lovely valley of Dehra Doon and on the Sewalik Hills. The amount of game bagged was, perhaps, not great; but still, when the glorious scenery, the free life, and all the concomitant charms are taken into consideration, it was well worth the trouble. Experienced sportsmen, with better batteries than we possessed, might no doubt have done far more. I was shooting with a 12-bore C. F. rifle, by Henry of Edinburgh, which subsequently did good execution amongst tigers, bison, &c.; whilst MacLeod had only a 10-bore muzzle-loading rifle, both weapons of far too heavy calibre for deer-

shooting. Doubtless, had we possessed Express rifles of .450 or .500 bore, we should have done better ; but they were not well known in India in the days that I write of, and their price, too, was beyond the reach of an ensign's modest means. Since those days I have been fortunate enough to participate in and enjoy many and varied forms of sport, but the recollection of few come back with greater vividness than those jolly days spent amid the lovely scenery of the Doon valley and the Sewalik Hills, when

“ All the world was young, lad.”

CHAPTER VII.

SMALL-GAME SHOOTING AND NATURAL-HISTORY
NOTES ROUND DELHI.

I HAVE often been asked what sort of small-game shooting is to be had in India, by those who cannot afford to go in for big game, and yet want to know what sort of sport is obtainable by a man who has neither the time nor the means to pursue the larger *feræ naturæ*. I will therefore endeavour to supply the want, and select as a field of operations the vicinity of Delhi, for during my sojourn there it afforded about as grand a hunting-ground as could be desired. Not only was game existent in numbers, but in such variety that even the most exacting sportsman could hardly be dissatisfied with his bag at the end of a day. I allude, of course, to a man who could hold fairly straight.

The approximate cost of such an expedition would, however, be difficult to calculate with nicety, as much must depend on the scale on

which it is conducted. If the sportsman is modest in his requirements, the expense will be trifling, and, with the exception of the hire of a couple of bullock-carts and the pay of a few beaters, it will not cost him more than if he were living in cantonments. It is, however, hardly worth while entering into minute details on such a subject, for I presume no man would make a journey to India for the express purpose of shooting small game, when at a less cost he can obtain it nearer home. As an example, however, of what sport could be obtained, and is, I believe, still obtainable round Delhi (for I had a letter from a friend at Delhi but a short time ago giving items of a capital bag), I will, for the benefit of any sportsman who may find himself located in the city of the Moguls, narrate the result of two of my trips.

On November 23d, myself and two brother officers, Captain (now Lieutenant-Colonel) Clay and Ensign (now Lieutenant-Colonel) Chalmers, having obtained three days' leave of absence, started off our kit in a couple of bullock-carts for a village named Kereala, twelve miles distant from Delhi, on the Rhotok road. A word, perhaps, as to kit may not be out of place here. *Item*, two pâl tents, weighing, with poles and iron pegs, some 50 lb. each. These tents were about eight feet long by nine feet wide, and were quite big enough to ad-

mit two camp-beds. Clay occupied one tent in virtue of his seniority, whilst Chalmers and I doubled up in the other. *Item*, a box with our crockery, another with stores, in the shape of wine, beer, soda-water, tea, sugar, &c. *Item*, three fold-up chairs, and ditto wash-hand stands, with brass basins, commonly known as *chillumchis*. *Item*, three charpoys, or native bedsteads, with bedding rolled up in waterproof sheets. *Item*, ammunition and gun-cases. *Item*, a small port-manteau with change of clothing. Horse-clothing and sundries, with servants' kit, completed the two loads; and as we saw the carts rumble off from our quarters in the Fort, piled up with our *impedimenta*, on the top of which were perched our native servants, accompanied by their wives and dusky broods, we inwardly hoped that they would not break down on the way.

Of course, in India, one has a whole army of servants — bearer, khidmutghar, bhisti, dhobie, mèhter, and syce and grass-cutter to each horse; but on these occasions we used to cut our retinue down to the lowest dimensions, and our following consisted of one khidmutghar, who did the cooking and waited at table; one bhisti; one mèhter, who had charge of my two dogs, a greyhound and a cross-bred terrier, who were my constant companions; and our respective bearers, syces, and

grass-cutters. Altogether our native attendants numbered twelve—a large number, seemingly, to attend to the wants of three British officers; but it must be remembered that in Bengal and the North-West Provinces “caste” is rampant, and you are obliged to have a separate servant for every individual menial office. It is different in the Bombay and Madras Presidencies, where a good “boy” will valet, cook, and do for you generally.

Tiffin over at the mess, we mounted our ponies and set off about 3 P.M. Our way at first lay through the principal street, the Chandnee Chowk, and progress here was necessarily slow, thronged as it was with a noisy, gay-garmented crowd of pedestrians, groaning camels, native swells on screaming tattoos, with their manes and tails dyed a deep red, huge elephants, and all the *magna committante caterva* of a native city. However, at last we pushed our way through, and on getting clear of the city gates, were able to progress at a smart canter, which landed us at Kereala about 6 P.M. Here we found our little camp pitched under a giant banyan-tree, whose dependent roots made the single tree bear all the appearance of a miniature forest.

Our camp arrangements had been left to the care of “Æsop,” Clay’s khidmutghar, and well

had that worthy acquitted himself; for the site was well chosen to windward of the village, and some half-mile distant from it. A well, too, was in handy proximity. After dismounting and imbibing a refreshing "peg" of gin-and-tonic, a grateful beverage with which to wash the dust out of our throats, we hastily donned our bathing-drawers, whilst the bhisti gave us our evening tub. A simple arrangement this, consisting of squatting on a piece of board whilst the bhisti, from his skin mussuck, treats you to a *douche*. Then we sat down to a dinner of tinned soup, curry, roast-fowl, and a sweet omelette. The repast finished, a roaring wood-fire was lit, for the nights are cold in the North-West Provinces, and round this we sat till about 10 P.M. smoking the pipe of peace and contentment, and making plans for the morrow.

24th.—A lovely day—not too hot, and with a pleasant breeze blowing. Æsop has some twenty coolies of various grades of intelligence waiting for us, one of whom, in charge of the tiffin-basket, is told off to accompany us. Though not all "old soldiers" in the strict sense of the word, we have learnt the necessity of not cutting ourselves off from our base of supplies; and besides, shooting is often thirsty work, and throats are apt to get parched after much walking beneath an Indian

sun. By 10 A.M. we have breakfasted, and, mounting our ponies, ride off to the first ground we intend beating. This consists of several *khèts* or fields of sugar-cane and *bajri* (a high sort of reed-like grain, and favourite covert for game). Two of us go forward, whilst one walks with the beaters. The fun soon begins, the ball being opened by Clay, who bowls over a hare. Then black (*Francolinus vulgaris*) and grey (*Francolinus pondicherryanum*) partridges whir up at intervals, the former affording most sporting shots, as on rising they fly up perpendicularly some twenty to thirty feet, with a loud "whir," before they sail off on their line of flight for the next *khèt*. A bonny bird is the black partridge—handsome in plumage, at least the male is, with his black, white-spotted breast, strong on the wing, and game-looking withal. Not bad eating either is he, though somewhat dry, like most Indian game. The grey partridge, on the contrary, though he affords a pretty shot, is generally left unmolested, except by the veriest "griffin." Smaller than our English bird, and without the horse-shoe on his breast, his known foul-feeding habits debar him from a place of honour on the list of Indian game. The *khèt* is a small one, but affords, for its size, pretty shooting. Then we move on to the next, where

the same game is repeated, an additional element of excitement being added from the loud shouts of the beaters of "*Hirn ! hirn !*" ("Deer ! deer !"). But the wily antelope (*Antilope cervicapra*) are too wily for us, and breaking back through the beaters, emerge at the far end, and go stotting away in graceful bounds till they disappear from sight. There are five does, a couple of well-grown fawns, and a lovely black buck, whose sleek ebony coat and spiral horns make us itch to possess them. However, shooting antelope with shot is not much fun, and not to be compared to stalking them ; besides, there were any quantity about nearer Delhi, and so we do not share the disappointment of the beaters, though we should have liked one or two specimens of antelope to add variety to the bag. And so the game goes on till all the sugar-cane and *bajri* is beaten, some affording lots of shooting, others less, but all contributing their quota to the game-sticks.

It is now 2 P.M. and tiffin-time ; so, making for a grove of mango-trees, we discuss that pleasant meal, and after a smoke and a rest, resume operations. Our first beat is a small patch of scrub-jungle, consisting mostly of jow, a sort of dwarf cyprus, interspersed with coarse rough grass. Forming line across this, a chikara buck (*Gazella Bennettii*) rises at my feet, and a charge of No. 5

shot bowls him over. Very acceptable will he be to our larder, for the venison is capital. A few more hares, an odd partridge or two, and, strange to say, a couple of snipe—which, rising simultaneously, are neatly accounted for right and left by Chalmers—are the result of the beat. After this some *dàhl khèts* produce eight to ten couple of quail and a hare, which, going away wounded, affords Fanny (my greyhound) a pretty little course before she kills it. Poor old Fanny, what fun you and I used to have! When I first took Fanny out she used to bolt after every hare she saw; but one day, not knowing she was in pursuit, I fired at a hare in some thick scrub. I missed the hare, but drilled three neat little holes through Fanny's ears with No. 5 shot. It was a lesson to her. From that day forth she never left my heel till told to go; and, oddly enough, if I shot a hare, she would always retrieve it most tenderly; but if she killed one herself after a course, nothing would induce her to touch it when once dead, though with a jackal or fox she was a perfect savage, even when their lives were extinct, and broke them up as a fox-hound would.

Soon after, I spy a chikara standing by the edge of a *khèt*. A convenient nullah affords a good opportunity of stalking it; so, taking my rifle, I proceed to carry out this intention, whilst my

companions sit down and smoke a pipe. To make a long story short, I get up within eighty yards, and—miss! Turning homewards, we come across an old, dry well. Standing well back, we direct the coolies to throw in some stones. As these rattle down the sides of the cavity, there is a great flapping of wings, and out dash half-a-dozen blue rock-pigeons (*Columba intermedia*). Three fall to our six barrels, whilst another, wobbling on hard hit, falls a little distance off. A couple of pea-hens, shot on our way home, complete the bag—no, I am wrong, for I shot a peacock actually in camp! It was on this wise: Just before dinner, happening to look up into the tree under which our camp was pitched, I saw a large dark object. What this could be was a matter of discussion. I said it was a vulture, Chalmers that it was a peacock, whilst Clay said we were both wrong, and it was only a patch of extra thickly growing leaves. To settle matters I took a shot at it, when down flopped the bird almost right on to Æsop, who was completing his culinary operations, scattering the embers of his fire, and with a cry of “Chok, chok!” legged it right off amongst the bullocks and ponies, hotly pursued by my terrier Nelly. Then a most ludicrous scene took place. The bovines stampeded, galloping off into the darkness with their tails cocked in the

air, as if the most venomous gad-fly had stung them. Two of our ponies got loose, and immediately engaged in a pitched battle, with much screaming and many resounding hoof-strokes. The native servants and their womenkind all began a regular hullabaloo, whilst Æsop loudly denounced the unhappy bird in choicest epithets of that very copious vocabulary of abuse, the tongue of Hindustan, for upsetting one of his pans and spoiling "master's" dinner; whilst all the while "master" and his friends were in fits of laughter. At last order was restored, and the fugitive captured. A pleasant dinner and much chat, whilst we cleaned our guns, wound up a very pleasant day, and only made us keener for the sport of the morrow.

25th.—After breakfast we gave directions for the camp to be moved to Mongolpoor, a village eight miles distant (where we heard there was some good snipe-ground), intending to shoot our way there. We rode out about three miles before beginning to shoot, and the ground we traversed was of much the same description as that gone over the previous day. We did not, however, get such a good bag, either in quantity or variety. This was attributable to two causes: first, owing to the covert not being so good; and secondly, that a good deal of our time was

devoted to stalking antelope, of which we saw several herds. This involved considerable delay, and was not productive of much, owing to various causes, our bad shooting being the principal one. Clay was the only lucky one of the party, and he managed to knock over two black buck, one bearing a good head. Still our game-sticks made not a bad show at the end of the day, festooned as they were with black partridge, snipe, quail, and pea-fowl, whilst the two black buck and sundry hares added variety to the bag.

When we reached the village of Mongolpoor, at about 5 P.M., not a sign was there of our camp; so, after showering much abuse on the head of the absent *Æsop*, all we could do was to sit down and patiently await his arrival. Not that the delay was unfruitful, however, for it offered us many opportunities of observing the numerous and various inhabitants, furred and feathered, of the mango-grove under which we decided to pitch our camp.

Whilst we are waiting, let us look round and spot the various birds and animals that may be observed in such localities. The quadruped that first claims our attention is the common striped squirrel (*Sciurus palmaru*), that ubiquitous little rodent which no one, after twenty-four hours' sojourn in India, can have failed to observe. Is

he not a cheeky little rascal, bobbing round the giant trunks of the mango-trees, frisking among the branches, and scuttling from one tree to another with graceful antics and shrill squeaks? He is full of life, impudence, and fun; and though often troublesome from his impudent familiarity and incessant chirping, his beauty causes you to forgive him and tolerate his presence. In a garden they are most mischievous, doing much damage to fruit; but, on the other hand, they do a deal of good by destroying many insects, notably beetles and white ants (that curse of the East), both in their larval and mature stages. He may be briefly described as about 13 inches in length, of which the tail is quite half. Here is Jerdon's description: "Above, dusky greenish-grey, with three yellowish-white stripes along the whole length of the back, and two fainter lines on each side; beneath, whitish; tail with the hairs variegated with red and black; ears rounded." With all due deference, though, to the great Indian naturalist, I must confess I have not noticed the red hairs in the tail, for, if they do exist, it must be the faintest tinge of red. To me they always seemed more cinnamon-colour, about the shade of a corn-crake's wing, so much used for dressing trout-flies. He is a jolly little fellow, however,

Master Sciurus, and if you have nothing better to do, it will often afford you much amusement to watch his gambols and mad pranks.

And there is a curious Indian mythological legend connected with him, related by Sir Edwin Arnold. It runs thus: It is said that the god Shiva once saw a squirrel dipping his tail into the Bay of Bengal time after time and then shaking it dry on the shore. "Absurd little animal," the god said, "why do you do thus?" "Oh, Thousand-handed!" the squirrel replied, "the palm-tree holding the nest which contains my wife and children has fallen into the water by reason of a typhoon, and I am trying to bale the Bay of Bengal dry with my tail to save my dear family." Upon that the deity smiled graciously, and stooping down, stroked the tiny beast, leaving on its back the marks of his fingers and thumb, and afterwards commanded the ocean to retire until the little squirrel had recovered his nest and belongings.

Talking of gambols, look at that troop of the common Bengal monkey (*Macacus rhesus*). They will furnish you with food for reflection and amusement by the hour. I must confess to a sneaking affection for monkeys; they are so human, and yet such caricatures of depraved humanity. Not quite the right thing to admire

or study, perhaps, but yet, in the animal world, a subject that cannot but make us smile. We some of us admire—though I am bound to say I am not among the number—the wit of, and affect to be amused by, Hogarth's satires on the shady side of human nature, but these sink into insignificance compared with the manners and customs of the monkey tribe. Yes, very human are they, alas! with all the worst traits of humanity developed in them. Humanity, without a reasoning soul, they possess to a certain extent, though in animals this is called instinct. But I must not dwell further on this subject, only, if any of my readers wish to learn more of the ape tribe, let them go to the monkey-house at the Zoo, and if there they can preserve a grave face—well, they are more than human.

But what is that dark-grey, lithe little form, with pointed nose, that has emerged from a group of rough stones close by where we are sitting, and which, after staring at us impudently, trots off in an unconcerned manner? It is a mongoose (*Herpestes griseus*), or ichneumon, an animal well known in India, and about whose snake-poison-resisting properties so many arguments have taken place. Certain it is that the mongoose is a deadly enemy to snakes; but I think they owe their immunity from the

effects of the snake's poisonous fangs to the fact of being the quickest of the two in attack, and collaring the snake before the reptile can strike them. Be that as it may, the mungoose is always looked on with a friendly eye in India, though I fear he is addicted to egg-stealing, and is not particular in his diet. A dear friend of mine, and good naturalist, the late General M'Master, once told me of a case in point—viz., that on the stomach of a mungoose killed near Secunderabad being opened, it was found to contain a quail, a portion of a custard-apple, a small wasp's nest, a blood-sucker, and a number of insects! Truly, Mr Herpestes may be termed omnivorous! One word more, though, in his favour—he is a remorseless enemy of rats.

As dusk approaches there will be a great commotion among the tree-tops, and the large fox-bats (*Pteropus medius*), more commonly known as the flying-fox, will be observed flying off on their nightly rounds. There is a small pond near the grove, and as they launch out into the air, they may be seen to fly down cautiously and touch the water. Jerdon says he was unable to ascertain if they drank on such occasions, or merely dipped their bodies in the water, but the friend to whom I have alluded before, the

late General M'Master, held the opinion, based on careful observation, that they actually drank when they touched the water, and, from my own observations made in his company, I am inclined to this belief. They are supposed to be fructivorous, and they undoubtedly do great damage to fruit of all kinds, especially to mangoes; but they are insectivorous also, for if they are closely watched they will be seen to turn in the air, as if hawking moths or other insects. At Kamptee, in the Central Provinces, where I was subsequently stationed, these flying-foxes were a regular nuisance—so much so, that we organised a battue, and in three days shot over 1200. There exist in every station in India stringent rules against firing a gun in cantonments, and so we had to get the Brigadier's permission to shoot them, and rather ludicrous it seemed to read in Brigade orders the following announcement: "The following officers, &c., have permission to shoot flying-foxes within cantonments from the —th inst. to the —th." Many of our servants and other natives carried off the carcasses, vowing they were excellent eating; but we could not stomach them, though I have heard that at the Mauritius they are a common dish at the regimental messes. *De gustibus non est disputandum!* but I certainly never person-

ally met any European who had tasted them. The head is too dog-like in appearance, and the body so full of vermin, that, to my mind, it would require a very strong stomach indeed to partake of their flesh. This, however, may be but prejudice. Jerdon thus describes them : "Head and nape, rufous black ; neck and shoulders, golden yellow ; back, dark brown ; chin, dark ; rest of the body beneath, fulvous or rusty brown ; interfemoral membrane, brownish black ; length, 12 inches to 14½ inches ; extent of wings, 46 inches to 52 inches."

But before the bats come out we shall have opportunities of observing many of the more common species of Indian birds. Take a stroll with me through the grove, and let us note some of its feathered inhabitants.

Soaring round high up at various altitudes you will note the white scavenger-vulture (*Neophron ginginianus*), a foul-looking bird, with his yellowish-white and black plumage, and with a few sparse hairs sticking out from his head, that make him look like a bald-headed old miser ! His first cousin, the common pariah kite (*Milvus govinda*), poised on motionless pinions, is keeping up a conversation with him in shrill, tremulous, whistling notes. Doubtless their keen vision has taken cognisance of our approaching camp, and

they are congratulating themselves on the scraps of food they will obtain when it is pitched.

Those impudent black rascals, with grey backs and necks, which much resemble our "hoodie-crows," are the Indian species (*Corvus splendens*), though why named *splendens* goodness only knows. A most cheeky and ubiquitous bird is *Corvus splendens*, and utterly fearless of man. When the camp is pitched you will see him hopping about, poking his nose, or rather his bill, into everything, and if he be not closely watched, he will be sure to commit some petty larceny.

Over there, seated on that buffalo's back, you will see his congener, the King-crow (*Suchanga atra*), who is about the size of our English black-bird, with equally glossy plumage, but with a long tail, forked at the end like a blackcock's. He spends most of his time on the backs of sheep and cattle, where doubtless he finds plenty of food in the shape of parasitic insects. Occasionally you will see him launch himself up in the air like a fly-catcher, catch some insect on the wing, and then descend to his original perch.

"What is that bird with the vivid blue plumage?" That is the Indian Roller (*Coracias indica*), misnamed the Indian Jay by Europeans, a bold bird where he is unmolested; but his gaudy plumage has a commercial value, for John China-

man prizes his feathers highly for fans, and gives a high price for them, as well as for the skins of kingfishers, the gaudy blue colouring being quite the fashion in the Celestial empire. The Roller is a bird of omen in India amongst the natives. If one flies to the right, you will succeed in what you are going out to accomplish ; if it appears to the left, you will fail. There is a certain amount of analogy between this and our well-known legendary rhyme about magpies, but I cannot say that I ever found it come true in either case. That bird with the large feathered top-knot, long curved beak, and quaintly banded plumage of white, black, and cinnamon-colour, is the Indian Hoopoe (*Upupa epops*); and that bird with the wonderfully blended plumage of blue and green, with a long, slender, slightly curved bill, is the Indian Bee-eater (*Merops viridis*). You may see them perched by the score on all the telegraph-wires, from whence they dart off in pursuit of any passing insect. That sober-plumaged, yellow-legged bird, whistling softly like a starling, and perched above your head, is the common Mynah (*Acridotheres tristis*). He is one of the commonest of Indian birds, and is a great favourite amongst natives, who keep him caged as a pet. They are wonderful mimics, and can whistle a tune with marvellous accuracy.

This is especially the case with a variety obtained in the hills.

Ah, there are some doves ! Are not their tints wonderfully blended ? But you cannot see well here in the shade. Let us make one fly out. Now, note the metallic-like sheen on the wings of the bronzed-winged Dove (*Calcophaps indicus*). Are they not marvellous ? Do not despise our little friend if you are hard up for food, for, properly cooked, he furnishes no unworthy dish, believe me. That flash of golden-yellow darting between two trees is the Golden Oriole (*Oriolus kundoo*), commonly called the mango-bird, from, I suppose, the resemblance that its plumage bears to that king of fruits—a ripe mango. He is the *Loriot* of the French, and certainly his note of “Loriot, loriot,” uttered in a loud, mellow whistle, bears out the nomenclature. Here is the definition of the bird extracted from Bailey’s ‘Dictionary and Interpreter of Hard Words,’ the sixteenth edition of which was published in 1753, so the authority should be old enough to satisfy any one, quaint though the description is : “*Loriot*, a bird that, being looked upon by one that hath the yellow jaundice, cures the person and dies himself” !

That green, screaming, long-tailed phalanx approaching from the green fields is composed of parakeets—the small, green, rose-ringed Para-

keets (*Palæornis torquatus*), and the Alexandrine Parakeet (*P. alexandri*). Stand still a minute, and then some of them are sure to settle on the tops of the trees, and we can observe their antics; not that this will be an easy task, as they keep so high up, and their plumage assimilates so closely with the screen of foliage that intervenes between us and them, that it is difficult to detect them. What gymnasts they are, to be sure! Now hanging by their claws head downwards, anon swaying their bodies to and fro at the end of some slender twig, suspended by their beak. Amusing birds these parakeets, as every one knows, and a great favourite with the British soldier. When I came home from India with my regiment we had 900 parakeets on board, and the row they made at times was deafening. They fly with wonderful swiftness, and we used often, when we had nothing better to do, to station ourselves in their line of flight in the evening and shoot them. I think they are about as difficult shooting as anything, as they come with all the swing and impetus of driven grouse, and their long tails make them as delusive as a rocketing pheasant. They are not at all bad eating, and a parakeet curry is not to be despised.

That other gaily tinted bird is the Green Barbet (*Megalana caniceps*), who shows himself much

more freely than his pretty little brother, the crimson-breasted Barbet (*Xantholæna hæmacephala*), commonly called the "coppersmith," who is quite a ventriloquist, and seems to take a pleasure in misguiding any one who is looking for him. One moment you will vow his loud metallic note of "Took-took-took," that seems as if produced by striking a piece of hollow copper, sounds to your right. Look as keenly as you may, you will not discover the little rascal. The next moment it sounds to your left, then in front, above, behind you, until you are fairly bewildered, and all the while the bird may be close to you, and has never moved from his perch! In shape the barbets are stoutly made for their size, with a short thick bill, and short tail and wings, and they generally select as their perch the tops of the highest trees, which adds to the difficulty of detecting them.

As we stroll on you will see a great commotion on the ground just by the foot of that big tree. The dust is flying up, and there is a great chattering, and all this occasioned by some half-dozen or more small greyish birds about the size of our English thrush. They all seem busy scolding each other, or some one else, to the top of their bent; in fact, they resemble a regular conclave of old maids met for tea, gossip, and scandal.

They are a colony of Babbling Thrushes (*Crateropus canorus*), commonly called in India "the seven sisters." You never see them separately. Always in flocks, and always chattering.

Look at that little dark bird that is hopping about with all the familiarity of our well-known robin-redbreast. He is our Indian Robin (*Copsychus saularis*). He seems all black when seated and at rest; but when he flies you will notice his pied appearance, for his wings, back, and upper tail-coverts are banded with white. In size, though, he is much larger than our English bird.

Another familiar but sombre-plumaged bird is the Bulbul, or Indian Nightingale (*Pyononotus intermedius*). Only one bright spot of colour relieves his dusky garb—viz., a vivid spot of crimson-lake just under his tail, that gives you the impression of the bird having sat down on a stick of coloured sealing-wax for a moment!

But perhaps your neck is aching from looking up at all these birds; besides, it is getting late, and the sun will soon be down; so let us go and see if there are any signs of our camp coming up; for though I could point out to you many more birds, such as the Indian Nightjar (*Caprimulgus indicus*), the Pond Heron or paddy-bird (*Bubuleus coromandus*), the Rosy Pastor (*Pastor*

roseus), &c., I will refrain, for fear lest I should weary you. Anyhow, you will have seen enough to show you what a field for natural-history observation an Indian grove affords.

Making such mental notes and observations, the time passed rapidly; but as our watches pointed to seven o'clock, then half-past seven, and finally to eight, and there were no signs of the truant camp, we began to wax impatient, and our inner men commenced to assert their wants. Darkness, too, or rather moonlight, had come on, and we began to feel somewhat uncomfortable. At last there was a creaking of wheels, and presently the bullock-carts with all our retinue loomed in view. We were all very angry, and Æsop's master, Clay, was preparing to administer a sharp rebuke to him, when that worthy, with folded hands, humbly explained.

"Please, master, not gettin' angry. Those people at Kereala *very* bad. *Patel* [head man] great *budmash* [blackguard]; plenty *galee* [abuse] giving; no carts giving; no bullocks giving; then what I do? These bullocks plenty bobbery making and *hackerry* [cart] breaking, so long time coming," &c.

Perhaps there was a substratum of truth underlying Master Æsop's string of excuses, though doubtless, in reality, he and all the

other servants had been dawdling about at Kereala, smoking the everlasting hubble-bubble and discussing the price of *atta* (flour). Be that as it may, any further interrogations and explanations were cut short by one of the bullocks charging straight at us on being unyoked, and nearly upsetting Clay. However, at length camp was pitched, dinner eaten, and we turned in.

After breakfast on the 26th we all set to work and loaded cartridges; for we had expended a good many during the last few days, and hearing of some good snipe-ground in the vicinity, we did not wish to run short. At twelve o'clock we started, and *en route* formed line across some *dhāl*-fields, where we picked up a hare or two, a brace and a half of black partridges, and some five brace of quail. We also put up several antelope, but did not get a shot at them. At length we reached the snipe-ground, which consisted of patches of marshy ground stretching for about 300 yards on each side of a small irrigation canal. This ground extended for about a mile, and culminated in a largish reed-bordered tank, surrounded in its immediate vicinity by a *jheel*, or marsh, beyond which lay extensive paddy or rice fields. Directly we set foot on the wet ground the fun began. Snipe kept rising all round us, now singly, now in twos or

threes, anon in wisps of twenty or thirty. It was a shot almost every other step. The common snipe (*Gallinago caelestis*), jack snipe (*Limnocryptes gallinula*), and painted snipe (*Rynchæa bengalensis*), a worthless though handsome bird, were swarming. We did fairly well, missing, however, more than we killed, and losing many birds through our coolies' bad marking, till at last, about three o'clock, Chalmers and I ran short of cartridges. Leaving Clay to have tiffin, we mounted our ponies, and galloping back to camp, hastily loaded a hundred more cartridges each, and returned. In the meantime Clay had taken a turn over the ground we had just shot, and picked up a few more couple of snipe. We then joined forces and surrounded the tank, out of which we got a couple of blue-winged teal (*Querquedula circia*) and one common teal (*Querquedula crecca*), losing another, which dived into the weeds. We saw several of the latter, but they were too wary, rising at the first shot and going clean away. Then we turned our attention to the paddy-fields, and if the snipe had been abundant before, they were even more so now. The walking, too, was harder, as every one must know who has ever shot snipe in such places. We added a further variety to our bag here in the shape of four

bittern (*Botaurus stellaris*), which subsequently proved most excellent eating. One of our coolies got a nasty wound from one of these birds, which was only winged. Going to gather it, the bird threw itself on its back, and striking at the man as he stooped, sent its long pointed bill right into the fleshy part of his arm. It was lucky it missed his face, for had it struck his eye blindness must have resulted. We shot away till we could see no longer, though we could hear the snipe rising all round us, and then we made our way back to camp, bagging some half-dozen peafowl *en route*. These were plainly discernible roosting in some tall trees that bordered the roadside, and we knew they would be acceptable to the men of the regiment, so had no scruples in shooting them sitting. Then after dinner we mounted our tats and rode back to Delhi by moonlight, well satisfied with the result of our three days' shoot, which, besides other game, included over a hundred couple of snipe—enough, I fancy, to satisfy the greatest glutton.

About a week later, Chalmers, myself, and another brother officer revisited this identical ground at Mongolpoor, and, strange to say, we hardly found a snipe there. We, however, got some twenty odd couple out of some quite dry jow-scrub jungle about a mile and a half distant,

besides a few hare, black partridge, and quail. We got three more bittern, however, out of the paddy-fields. The first time we visited the *jheel* the day was cloudy, whereas the second it was blazing hot, and this may have made the snipe move away to where they could find shade, for we never saw anything like the number that we did on our first visit.

But one could get very good sport even nearer the city, as will be shown from the following account of a single-handed day I had. I was at the time encamped with a wing of my regiment on the historical "Ridge" near Hindoo Rao's house. This is a long, rocky ridge, facing on one side towards the famous Kashmir Gate and Metcalf's house, whilst on the other the ruins of the old cantonments, a collection of ruined and crumbling bungalows, rise amid an open forest of baubul-thorn trees. This used to be capital ground for hare and blue rock-pigeons, numbers of which inhabited the disused dry wells that were scattered about ; whilst the continuation of the "Ridge"—a stretch of barren, rocky ground—harboured lots of sand-grouse of both varieties,—namely, the common sand-grouse (*Pterocles exustus*) and the painted sand-grouse (*P. fasciatus*). Standing on the confines of our camp, I often had an opportunity of observing their cre-

puscular habits, as they gathered together and flew down in large flocks to drink at the river Jumna, that was plainly visible below the city walls some little distance off. Along the south bank of the river the Burrara jungle extended for some miles, a waving sea of grass. This grew to a height of ten to twelve feet where it had not been cut, interspersed in places with jow. It was Government ground for grass, and so had been cut with a certain amount of regularity, leaving rides, or open patches, which made beating such thick covert somewhat easier than it might otherwise have been.

Having now given some idea of the ground, I will describe the day, and as a mixed bag I think the result was very satisfactory. After parade, taking half-a-dozen coolies with me, I started off, and descending into the old cantonments, shot my way through them to where the ridge ended in a stretch of broken, rocky ground, near which I had given my syce instructions to wait for me with my pony. Half-a-dozen hares, and as many blue rocks, two common sand-grouse, and one of the painted variety, constituted my bag when I reached the rendezvous. Sending these back to camp, I mounted and rode on to the Burrara jungle, which was about some three miles distant. Here, having put my beaters in line, I went

forward and stationed myself in one of the openings. The first game to show was a grumpy old boar, who burst out close to me, and after one look, trotted off with an angry grunt. I had not then been initiated into the charms of pig-sticking, nor was that noble sport pursued in Delhi; but a hog was always as sacred in my eyes as a fox, and though I had a rifle by me, I did not fire at him. He was soon followed by his family of three sows and a dozen little striped squeakers; but of course they too were allowed to go unharmed. Then the fun began. Black partridges came rocketing overhead, affording most lovely shots, whilst a rush through the grass betrayed the movements of an antelope; hares scuttled across the open rides, and altogether I had a very pretty little "hot corner." Then several other patches were beaten in like manner, all adding their quota to the number of the slain. By this time I had reached an extensive break in the high grass—a long strip of low jow-jungle, which fringed the river-bank for about a mile, jutting out in places in little promontories. On a sandy spit in the stream I saw a large flock of geese, I fancy *Anser cinereus*; but though I tried to stalk them, they were too wary, and I failed to get a shot. The stalk, however, was not fruitless, for from behind one of the little promontories

five duck (*Anas boschas*) sprang, and my two barrels resulted in their leaving two of their number behind. There were numerous Brahmini duck (*Casarea rutila*) flying up and down the river, uttering their plaintive cry of "Chukwa-chukwee"; but these, though handsome-plumaged birds, are not worth powder and shot from an edible point of view, and as I did not even require one as a specimen, they were left alone. For I hold that no true sportsman kills for the sake of mere killing, and blazes away at everything that comes in his way, destroying life to the bitter end. My theory is, kill what you require or what can be legitimately disposed of, and leave the rest alone. To resume, however: in the jow I got several quail, nice plump little birds, and also four and a half couple of snipe, as well as a teal which sprang out of a little mud-hole. A further inspection of the river higher up added a red-headed pochard (*Aythia ferina*) and a whistling teal (*Dendrocygna awsuree*) to the bag. Then I turned homewards, taking another beat back through the jow, picking up a hare or two, a stray black partridge, and a brace and a half of quail. Altogether a very satisfactory mixed bag of some sixty odd head.

Such are specimens of the small game to be obtained, or perhaps, strictly, that were to be

obtained, in the vicinity of Delhi, and which I believe could still be got, though perhaps the intending sportsman might have to go a few miles farther than I did. This, however, with the facilities of sending on relays of horses that one has in India, and the distances one is accustomed to ride in the gorgeous East, presents no very great difficulty.

On the side of the river most remote from Delhi, towards Luni, there used to be large herds of black buck (*Antilope cervi-capra*) and a good many ravine deer (*Gazella Bennettii*), but these may have been thinned during the last few years. Still farther north, and between Meerut and Roorkee, near Mozuffurnuggur, extends a vast *jheel*, which will never, in our day at least, be shot out, and the sandy plains around abound with antelope and sand-grouse. Amongst the latter is the large species (*Pterocles arinarius*), nearly as big as our own grouse. Then, too, the celebrated Kadir, or old bed of the Ganges, lies not very remote, and here any amount of small-game shooting may be obtained, though I would warn sportsmen not to trespass there too much without making due inquiries first, as it is a favourite hunting-ground of the Meerut Tent Club, and they naturally are averse to have the numerous hog it harbours disturbed by much firing.

These notes pretend to no scientific merit. They are merely jotted down from memory, refreshed by reference to my Shikar Diary; but they may prove of some little benefit and interest to those who find themselves, as I did, on the spot with no one to give him a hint as to what game he might expect to find, or where to look for it.



Black Buck.

CHAPTER VIII.

AFTER JUNGLE-FOWL IN CEYLON.

“WHY don't you have jungle-fowl for dinner sometimes?” I asked my brother, when staying with him some years ago on a Ceylon coffee-estate where he was the *periya durai* or assistant.

The remark was called forth by the constant daily dish of beef, beef, beef, which in those days constituted the dinner diet of an up-country planter, and one which even all the cunning culinary art of a first-rate *apoo* could not disguise in sufficiently pleasant variation. We had beef in curry, beef hashed, beef croquettes, bubble-and-squeak, beef minced, and so on until my inner man revolted; and fresh from an Indian hot-weather trip, with jungle all round us (sadly devoid of game, however), I naturally turned to the bird that had afforded me good sport and good food when out in camp.

“Ah! I wish I could get hold of some of

them," was the reply; "but I have not time to look after them, and besides, I cannot take the estate coolies to beat. There are any amount of birds about, for it is a *niloo* year; but if you can bag a few, I'll say thank you all the same, though you will be lucky if you get a shot, for they are leary birds, I can tell you."

This was casting somewhat of an aspersion on my knowledge of woodcraft, so I determined to have a prowl round the coffee and the adjacent jungle the next day, and see what I could do.

I started after *chota hazri* the next morning, accompanied by two as unlikely-looking aids to the gun as can well be imagined—viz., a big Scotch deer-hound named Gruach, and a brindled Australian kangaroo-hound called Tiger, both of which belonged to a friend of my brother, and were used by him as "seizers" when hunting elk, as sambhur are wrongly called in Ceylon. Good as the dogs were for hunting their legitimate game, they seemed rather out of place when employed to bag jungle-fowl; but they looked so wistfully at me when I lit my morning pipe in the verandah, and seemed to plead so hard to accompany me, that I gave in and let them come, more especially as my morning stroll was undertaken more with a view of

prospecting the ground than obtaining actual sport.

I had not gone more than 300 yards along one of the paths that were cut here and there through the coffee, when Gruach threw up his head, pricked his ears, and dashed into the coffee, followed by Tiger. A jackal, I thought. But it was game, at least from a gastronomic point of view. The dogs were evidently hunting something, so I ran on ahead to where a little ravine, planted with guinea-grass for the estate cattle, rifted the slope of the hill. I got there just in time to see a hare run out not thirty yards from me, and a charge of No. 6 shot laid her low as the dogs burst out on her track. Looked at from a strictly sporting point of view, I ought undoubtedly to have punished this case of running riot; but I had a selfish object in view, and, moreover, was youthful and keen to hunt *anything* with *anything*. So puss was soon gralloched and handed over to a passing coolie to take to the bungalow, whilst Gruach and Tiger devoured the *gralloch* as a stimulus to their ardour.

Higher up I worked my way through the coffee-bushes, the dogs hunting on each side of me, till I reached a field of two-year-old coffee. Here the giant forest-trees that had partially

survived the "burn" lay with their great blackened trunks, gradually mouldering in decay, and one of these seemed to have special attraction for the dogs. Sniffing at one side, they would suddenly bound over to the other with cocked ears, as if expecting something to bolt. That there was *something* under the tree-trunk was evident, for it lay across a little dip in the ground, and the rank grass and weeds neglected by the weeders had grown up thickly against the sides. The dogs' excitement waxed greater, so I got on to the trunk and began to stamp upon it. This had the desired effect, for out flew a spur-fowl, which fell to my shot; and a little farther on, in a patch of seedling coffee, or "nursery," the dogs put up its fellow, which succumbed to a charge of No. 6 after being well hunted about.

I had now reached the jungle, but dared not venture in, though I heard a jungle-cock crowing lustily, for fear the dogs might get on to the line of a pig or sambhur; so skirting its edge some fifty yards away, I coasted along on my return journey. A good half-mile had I gone with the jungle on my right, and the dogs hunting the coffee below me, when they put up a jungle-cock (*Gallus ferrugineus*), and not to be confused with that noble bird of Southern

India (*G. sonerattii*). Up he flew from his forest home, and then catching sight of me, rose higher, as if conscious of his danger. The sunlight gleamed on his red breast, and his long tail streamed behind him as he rocketed over, affording a most sporting shot. Bang! and he slewed up against the wind as if acknowledging the salute, but the second barrel settled him, and he fell with a crash at the edge of the jungle, a proof positive that jungle-fowl were to be got.

Then home in triumph with my bag of a hare, a brace of spur-fowl, and a jungle-cock—a welcome addition to the larder.

For my evening's sport I decided to adopt different tactics, and try what I could do by either waiting or sneaking about quietly in the jungle. So about 4 P.M., after putting on a pair of racket-shoes so as to move more noiselessly, I started out alone. A walk of about half a mile brought me to the edge of the jungle, and creeping cautiously on for some 300 yards, I sat down near a patch of *niloo*. The surroundings were indeed entrancing. Overhead huge forest-trees towered, through whose wide-spreading branches the evening sun just flickered and danced, casting fantastic shadows on the mossy carpet at my feet. Below me the *oya*, or river, leapt in a sheer fall of some

300 feet over a mass of rock, forming a seething mass of foaming water whose roar nearly drowned all other sounds. Beautiful flowers, orchids, and ferns grew thickly at my feet, or clung to the branches of the trees overhead; and below the rock on which I sat, the *Wanaraja*, or king of plants, peeped out with its beautiful lilac-grey little flower, and its leaves of delicate brown velvet veined with gold. A short distance below the ground fell abruptly, but in every crevice where it was possible for a handful of earth to withstand the wash of the rain, there grew a luxuriant mass of vegetation, varying from delicate ferns to trees whose snake-like roots were for more than half their growth above ground. Bird-life was scarce, and save a bird-of-paradise fly-catcher and a myna or two I saw none. The stream, tumbling over the "Devon Falls," rolled on with a monotonous yet soothing sound, and a crash in the tree-tops amid the jungle above, denoting where some *Wan-deroo* were indulging in monkey gambols, were all the sounds I could hear. For half an hour I sat, smoked the pipe of meditation, and revelled in all the glories of nature. Then a shrill clarion-like challenge came from my right, though still far away. A moment more and it was answered from the left. Twice, thrice were they repeated, each time nearer, and then from my sheltering rock I

saw three or four sober-plumaged little jungle-hens daintily picking their way towards the *niloo*, stopping every now and then to scratch away the dead leaves in search of worms or some dainty insect-morsel. Again a cock crew quite close, but this time the challenge remained unanswered. I now bethought me of a somewhat poaching dodge learnt from an old Gond in the Berar jungles, by which I might lure the cocks to their destruction. Be tolerant with me, I pray ye who read, and dub me not rascal and poacher, for remember I was shooting for the pot, and my stomach yearned for some change from the everlasting beef! The dodge was simple, and merely consisted of clapping my open and bent hand sharply three or four times in quick succession against my thigh at intervals. This produced a sound much resembling the flapping of wings—a subdued challenge which no right-minded jungle-cock can resist.

It had the desired effect. Quickly appeared on the scene the rival combatants with trailing wings and hackles erect, all thirsting for the fray, whilst the fair sex (as usual) looked on in unconcern. I was mean, I confess, for the two gallant birds fell to my shot before they had time to cut each other into ribbons, and a hasty snap-shot at a hen as she scuttled off added another jungle-fowl to the bag. “A dirty low trick!” you will perhaps exclaim.

Well, perhaps it was, but you who would judge harshly of one, I pray take into consideration the "extenuating circumstances" that French law courts so often accord to offenders, and be merciful, and perhaps you may feel more lenient when I relate a little later the retributive justice that befell me for the foul deed! But no shadow of regret clouded my brow as I gathered my victims, and smoothing their glossy plumage and tucking heads beneath wings, I stuffed them into my bag and wandered on in search of fresh adventure. None befell me, however, and though I heard another jungle-cock crow, he either saw or heard my approach and made himself scarce.

And now to relate my punishment. We had the spur-fowl for dinner that day—and were not they just good! And the next day, and the next, we promised ourselves a similar treat. The following day I met my punishment. We returned home late, and found that two planters had dropped in unasked, as was the custom in those hospitable days, and had eaten a brace of the birds intended for our dinner. But that mattered little. The *appoo* was ordered to cook the other brace, and spatchcock them for celerity; and so after a tub we sat and smoked and talked—well, principally *coffee*. Patiently we waited, and the expected meal came not, but presently the *appoo*

did, with scared and angry face. In one hand by the scruff of the neck he held a cat, in the other a handful of torn flesh and feathers. In few words he told his tale. "Please, master, see what that d—d cat done." It was too true. Tom, the favoured and petted, that we never expected would have so demeaned himself, had succumbed to temptation and betrayed the trust reposed in him, a well-fed, indulged cat. He had strayed into the cook-house, and then and there disgraced himself. Perhaps he too hungered for fowl-flesh as a change from the everlasting beef; but hungry men's anger cannot be trifled with. A drum-head court-martial tried the thief; and soon after, a shot echoing on the still night air told that "Tom" had paid the penalty for being a thief, for the taste once acquired was hopeless to cure. Perhaps, after all, it served me right for the mean advantage I had taken of the jungle-cocks. *Quien sabe?*

Ah me! what changes time brings! Of the merry party of four assembled that night in the little planter's shanty in Dimbula, only another and myself remain; and as I write, a raging blizzard and some six inches of snow on the ground (when we had fondly hoped that spring had begun) make me fain long for happy days of long ago in the gorgeous East and Ceylon's spicy isle.

One little anecdote and I have done. My

brother's *appoo*, to whom I have referred, was not only a man of resource, but a *chef*. No matter how empty the larder and store-room, if guests turned up he always provided a decent dinner, and rumour had it that when with a former master he on one occasion eclipsed himself. It happened on this wise: S., his master, lived in a very out-of-the-way place. The week's beef had not arrived. The store-room was almost empty of tinned bacon and sardines, those great stands-by, and two travelling planters dropped in to dinner unexpectedly. *Appoo* was equal to the occasion, however, and served up soup, a most savoury ragout, and a jam omelette. After dinner, S., who was considerably puzzled as to how his *fidus Achates* had done so well, summoned him to his presence, when the following scene was enacted:—

S. "*Appoo*, you have given us a capital dinner to-night" (*appoo* smiles),—"a really first-class dinner. That stew is the best thing I have tasted for a long time. What the dickens did you make it from, for I know you have no beef?"

Appoo. "Me very glad master pleased."

S. "Yes; but what did you make it of?"

Appoo. "He! he! he! that time master pleased; I very glad; I always do best for master."

S. (getting a little annoyed at this tergiversation). "Yes, yes; *but what did you make it of?*"

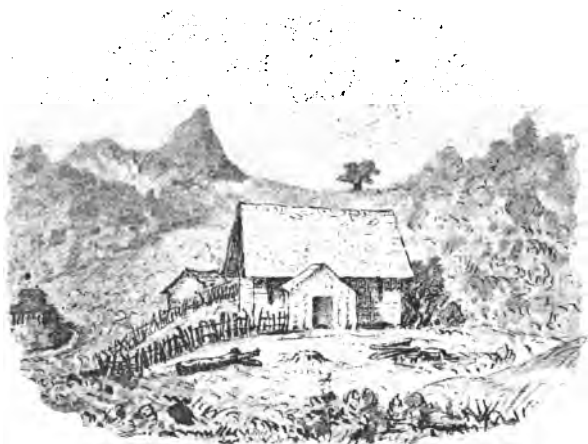
(*Appoo* grins, and edges towards the door.) “Do you hear me, sir; what was that stew made of?”

Still no answer, but more grins from the *appoo* as he gets nearer and nearer the door.

At last S. loses his temper, and jumps up, repeating his question.

By this time *appoo* has got the door open, and tremblingly falters out, “Please, master, yesterday master sh-sh-shooting” (a pause) “*one ape!*” and then bolts. *Tableau!*

It was only too true. With a view to getting a skin of the *Wanderoo* monkey, S. had shot one the previous day, and the man of pots and pans had from the carcass evolved the dish that had been so much appreciated.



A Periya Durai's Bungalow.

CHAPTER IX.

THE GRAND DUKE OF TUSCANY.

I AM no historian, nor am I well versed in the chronicles of the middle ages, when the ducal *seigneurs* bearing the above title were such a power in Italy. Not of them do I write; their actions good or evil; the pomp and splendour of their Court, or their deeds of war and love.

My theme is of a nobler animal, the “tuskèd boar,” whose courage and form have been celebrated in song, painting, and sculpture from time immemorial, whose head has been assumed as a crest by some of our noblest families, and whose very name is symbolical of cunning, ferocity, and undaunted courage.

The boar is not a flashy, sensational animal like the tiger; nor was he created for the special benefit of novelists, who, by the way, as a class know very little about him or his habits. With this class I dare not enter the lists of argument.

Their amazing intellect, and power of weaving fantastic ideas into apparent truth, crush all opposition and defy competition. Baron Munchausen is not "in it" with them, and they leave that delightful romancer lengths behind. Men and women of their creation are but as pigmies to the Titans and Herculeases of mythology; and the Amazons — those warrior-dames of whom Nestor loved to tell — and the Borgias of later days, are but innocent infants in strength and wickedness compared to the heroes and heroines of modern fiction. The boar, therefore, finds no place in the pages of modern fiction, and it can hardly be expected that the pages of romance should be soiled with the mention of a beast which in ordinary minds is merely associated with the filth of a farmyard. The tiger is a more convenient animal to introduce as an actor in some thrilling drama. Is he not an incarnation of supple, agile ferocity and treachery; and is he not adorned with fangs and claws that tear and rend in the most blood-curdling manner? Yes, the tiger is a grand resource; and if a major donned in spotless white (though why the victim should nearly invariably be a field-officer, and *always* clad in white, beats me, except that the white colour makes a prettier picture when well bespattered with crimson gore!) should generally

figure as the hero of the incident, why, the picture is the more complete. So the boar is relegated to obscurity, and is not deemed worthy as an instrument for the destruction of superfluous heroes. How could an animal that, if unmolested, would infinitely prefer using his tusks on some succulent root than on the hunter's prostrate form—who derives as much satisfaction from venting his fury on his enemy's hat as on his nether limbs—be usefully employed as an instrument of destruction? The idea is absurd. Fancy subjecting a man who stands 6 feet 4 inches in his stockings, who is the descendant of half the De Veres, Howards, Fitzfoozles, and other aristocratic families in the kingdom—who can crush pewter mugs as easily as he can crumple up a bit of paper, and who can back and ride the most fiery and untamable steed that ever was foaled—to the indignity of being killed by a pig, a mere pig! Bah! the notion is preposterous. No; if De Vere or Fitzfoozle is to die, let him die as a gentleman. Let the blue blood ooze slowly out and tinge the arid sand beneath some giant forest-tree. Let the royal Bengal tiger be the conqueror of the paragon, gasping out his life beneath his victim, who has stabbed him to the heart with a penknife! *Then* the public will applaud, and will have no cause

to embrace that modern heresy that all men are equal! The result of all this is, that poor *Sus cristatus* and his character suffer in the annals of fame. He is left to the tender mercies of sportsmen, who, with all their attributes of chivalry and generosity, are a little inclined at times to vaunt their triumphs at the expense of the "Grand Duke"! In some cases, alas! imagination runs riot with them. *In vino veritas* is not always a true saying. Distance and time lend enchantment to the view, and the narration of an incident which may have been considered trivial at the moment it took place, is touched up, coloured, and magnified till it is surrounded with a halo of exaggeration. They don't mean to be untruthful, not they, at least most of them, but they cannot resist the temptation of self-glorification. I am not bringing a sweeping charge against all hog-hunters—far from it; for have I not been one of the most ardent votaries of the sport myself? At the same time the pith of their anecdotes all points to one end—viz., that they were very good riders and adepts in the use of the spear, and that the boar who succumbed to their onslaught was a very unlucky animal to have come across them! The word *ego* predominates largely in their narration. "*I got up to him;*" "*I sheered off to avoid his charge;*" "*I gave him*

a good spear ;” “ *I did this, and I did that,*” &c. About the boar, his fierce courage, his indomitable pluck, and regret at the death of a noble foe, not one word—unless maybe it is a casual remark from one who has already done himself ample justice.

I do not mean to say that those who have partaken of the delights of hog-hunting do not hold their quarry in the highest veneration, for is he not the hero of a hundred songs, and is not the “Boar” the Indian sportsman’s favourite toast? What I maintain is, that the praise as between boar and hunter is unfairly apportioned, the hunter getting the greater share; and so this magnificent animal appears to disadvantage. He is nearly always depicted as being the conquered and not the conqueror. Yet I fancy if we poor humans could peruse the pages of pig history, we might read a different version, a reversal of the picture. There would be less of the triumphs of the spear and more of the “tusk,” less of the pig “jinking” and more of the sportsman “funking”! More would be related of the cunning sagacity that foiled the hunter, than of the hunter’s thundering over break-neck ground and jumping impossible nullahs! I can recall several instances in which a boar scored off all his pursuers, employing combined courage and cunning to effect

his escape, and leaving the mark of his keen ivory tusks on more than one horse. Ay, and I have known instances of a boar, and a sow too, seizing a hunter's foot in its mouth, and hanging on with the tenacity of a bull-dog, though speared through and through! More than once, too, can I recall to mind the case of a boar taking up his position in an awkward spot where none dared to ride at him, myself amongst the number.

For an animal whose very name is symbolical of filth and ugliness, the pig is, I think, worth some attention, for he has played no small part in the world's history. Every nation nearly has something to say of him. Perhaps the most well-known mention of swine is when that big herd of two thousand rushed violently down a steep place into the Sea of Tiberias. Without any wish to be profane, I always think it was "hard lines" on those pigs, and wonder why the "devils" could not have been sent into the sea without sacrificing the pigs. But I am treading on delicate ground. However good one's principles may be, one cannot always control one's thoughts, and thoughts are so independent of control that sometimes one might as well not have any principles at all.

Let us continue to glance at the pig as he figures in history. The Chinese are credited

with having first discovered the succulency of roast-pork; and though there may be some obscurity on this point, for Confucius makes no mention of such an important article of diet, his countrymen may as well have the credit of having made the discovery, as well as those of printing, gunpowder, &c. To the Jews he is an abomination, likewise to the Sikh and the Mahomedan, who, though they will kill a pig, will not eat him. The story of the cartridges greased with pigs' fat having been one of the alleged causes of the great Indian Mutiny, is familiar to all. The Irishman feeds on him after allowing him to occupy his cabin with his wife and family. The Saxon fattens him till his flesh turns into fat bacon and hams, which may be considered staple articles of food. The Anglo-Indian hunts him with horse and spear. The French and Germans shoot him, whilst in America he is one of the great articles of commerce.

There is nothing taking in the appearance of the domestic pig, nor can he by the greatest stretch of imagination excite much interest. There is something repulsive in his appearance as well as his habits. He is always ugly, and generally a foul feeder, particularly in India. But his wild congener of Hindustan is a very different creature—note his counterfeit present-

ment, "a 38½-incher." Ugly and plebeian he may be, but yet endowed with one superexcellent virtue. He is brave beyond all other animals, —brave and rash, perhaps, with the bravery born of stupidity, but brave to the backbone nevertheless. The tiger respects him, the elephant dreads him. I have seen an elephant staunch and true, the hero of a hundred encounters with tigers, flee in abject terror at a litter of little stupid "squeakers" getting up under his feet. He faces boldly both horse and man, and woe betide the wretched dog that comes within reach of his ivory tusks! This pluck is the distinguishing merit of his race, and is the cause of his popularity with British sportsmen. Fox-hunters hold a fox in just veneration, and so do hog-hunters esteem a wild boar, holding him sacred from destruction save through the medium of one legitimate weapon, the spear. If a man ever ventures to assert he has shot pig, ten to one he will add by way of excuse, "It was in country where you could not *ride*," just as the destruction of foxes in the Highlands of Scotland is excused.

The geographical range of the Indian boar may be said to be almost ubiquitous. On the borders of heavy jungle, and at the foot of every hill-range where the dense undergrowth affords him shelter, the wild hog abounds. In

the alluvial cypress-grown islands of rivers, in the jungle on their banks, in the fields of sugar-cane, millet, and other crops, he makes his lair, if there is any jungle within twenty, ay, even forty miles. But the lowest ranges of jungle-clad hills are his favourite resting-place. There he slumbers 'neath the grateful shade during the sultry noontide, till night falls. Then he trots off for the plains and supper, trudging along at a most marvellous pace that quickly takes him over the ground—a pace that is something less than a trot, something more than a walk. Laziness certainly cannot be laid to the charge of the wild hog, for it is astonishing how many miles he will travel for his food. Distance has no deterrent effect on him, as long as it can be covered during the hours of night. As a rule, he returns to his lair at the time when “the moon and the day meet,” just before dawn; but if some appetising crop, some succulent patch of sugar-cane, should tempt him, he will lurk in the covert all day, perhaps longer, treating with disdain any effort to dislodge him on the part of the distracted peasantry, whom he will charge without hesitation should they attempt to evict him. During the rains and the cold weather hog are very fond of lying up in the crops, and will often take up their abode

in some of the adjacent *rumnahs* or grass-coverts. Sugar-cane is their choicest delicacy, and to the porcine palate occupies the relative position of toffy to a schoolboy. To enjoy this delicacy hog will make many sacrifices; and they are, moreover, generally inclined to resent any intrusion on their temporary domain, and to prove by the aid of strong white tusks that "possession is nine points of the law"! So there the wild boar lies and munches the juicy cane, let the irate husbandman yell and bawl as he likes. Some day, perhaps, a white hunter more determined arrives on the scene, accompanied by numerous beaters, with much discordant music. These are too much for his nerves, and he sallies leisurely forth. Once out in the open plain, he fights out the battle to the bitter end, like the hero that he is. This habit of travelling long distances for his food puts the boar in splendid condition, and if met with near his jungle home after returning from a midnight foray, the pace he will go for a short distance will tax the powers of the fleetest horse. Once cut off from his retreat, he stands and fights it out, charging each foe with reckless bravery. Yes, he is a gallant brute, and deserves greater recognition than he meets with. By none have his merits been more ably recorded than by

Major Baden-Powell in his capital book—a book which every one who has once taken part in the entrancing sport of hog-hunting should possess. His pen, far more able than mine, has described fully the *minutiæ* of the sport, and it would therefore ill become me to do so.

I have but taken up the cudgels on behalf of a gallant foe, many combats with whom have given me and other sportsmen much enjoyment and the happiest moments of our lives, for he is the most sporting of the many sporting animals of Indian shikar. As such, I have endeavoured to do him justice, and to exhibit him in his true character. Long may he flourish! say we, as we, who have once hunted him on his native plains, remember all the fun he afforded us; and may he in the future be deemed more worthy of honourable notice in the annals of sport as The Grand Duke of Tuscany!



The Grand Duke.

CHAPTER X.

A HUNTER'S CAMP IN THE EAST.

ONLY those who have experienced the delights of a free, unconventional life in the jungles can appreciate its enjoyment. The change from the heat and dust of a cantonment and its concomitant ceremonies, compared to the freshness and liberty of camp-life, is indeed great. For the nonce, if you be a military man, you are your own commanding officer : no orderly - room, no parades, courts - martial, or any other dull yet necessary routine of a soldier's life. Or, if you be a civilian, what a boon to be far away from all the dreary details of business and officialdom ! The fresh scenery, the hard exercise, the constant expectancy of sport, all tend to keep up your spirits, invigorate both body and mind, and generally improve your health in the sunny land of Ind, where the enervating influences of climate sap the energies, both mental and physical. Yes,

in very truth it is a joyous time, and when passed in the heyday of youth, vigour, and health, ten times more enjoyable. Such scenes, too, are apt to impress themselves on our memories. Their image remains when other and more important acts, scenes, and episodes in daily life have faded away into the mists of oblivion, and he who has once tasted the charms of camp-life in the glorious Eastern jungles may well say—

“Those days come on me like recollected music.”

Ay will they! We smell the “smell of the fields,” we hear all the sounds of camp-life, the neigh of our horses, and the bubbling groans of the baggage-camels. We see the rolling jungle-clad hills, rifted here and there with dark and rocky ravines, the home of tiger, panther, and bear; the forest aisles of waving, feathery, graceful bamboo, the haunt of bison, sambhur, and spotted deer, rise up before us. Nay, we even seem to hear on some starlight night the deep, guttural growl of a tiger, or the bark of a startled deer; for the alarm-note of the *Cervidæ* is more of a bark than anything else, and far different from the challenging roar of an amorous stag. All, all these seem to float with lifelike distinctness across the vision of our brain, as their ghosts are called up from the Valhalla of the past.

Let me endeavour to carry my reader with me. Ample justice, such as it deserves, I feel I can hardly do the subject. One needs the pen of an artist in language to depict the scene as it ought to be portrayed, to dash in the lights and shades, and give life to the dry bones of mere narrative. Still I will do my best, and ask my readers to cast away their surroundings for the time being, to convey themselves in spirit many thousand miles away from their comfortable fireside, and imagine themselves just starting for a shikar trip.

In an able article in the 'Universal Review' of June 1890, Mr P. Hordern discourses eloquently on "Things missed in India." No doubt he is right on many points, but I venture to think he is wrong when he touches on sport. There are two sides to every question, and in the article referred to, the writer dwells at somewhat disproportionate length on the thousand and one worries of Indian domestic life. No picture of this would be truthful if these were omitted, but do not let us overdraw them. To Mr Hordern, India is a land of strangers and aliens, a land of desolation to be avoided and got out of as quickly as possible, and he has no good word to say for it or its teeming population. Granted there are many things missed in India, many drawbacks to the

enjoyment of life there, yet how many pleasures do we obtain in this much-abused country which we fail to get in Britain! I speak as a pure sportsman, mind; and certainly, if you come to compare the sport attainable in both hemispheres, why, that of the East (to use a slang aphorism) "takes the cake."

But let us start on our trip. Our party is composed of five. You and I, and B—— and C—— and F——. Five is a good number: there are enough for a rubber at whist to while away the hot noontide hours when you have no big game to pursue, and sufficient to decide, by a clear majority, any vexed questions of argument or plans that may arise. With our friends B—— C—— and F—— we have at present nothing to do; for we will join them at our first camp, some thirty odd miles distant, by-and-by. In the meantime you and I have to get there. The camp-kit has all been sent on some days previously, and everything will be ready for us. Our friends have preceded us; for on the eve of starting we find ourselves detailed for a regimental court-martial or commissariat board, or some other irksome duty. You see, I am supposing we are both soldiers, and as such, of course, we shall grumble horribly, and wish pro-

fanelly that the service was at the bottom of the sea. Nevertheless we shall, I hope, do our *devoir* to the best of our ability and conscience and "the custom of war in like cases."

The time has come at last, however, and we have laid out a *dāk* or stage of borrowed ponies for the first twenty miles, and our own nags will take us on the final ten. So at about 6 A.M. one bright morning in March, after hastily swallowing a cup of tea and crunching some toast and eggs, we light the morning cheroot, and swinging ourselves into the saddle, canter gaily out of cantonments as happy and full of larks as a couple of schoolboys. What reck we of the cloud of dust we raise behind us? Shall we not soon be quit for a couple of months at least of all the glare and dust and noise of station-life? No "Black Care" sits behind our saddles, in spite of what the Latin poet says about its accompanying every horseman.

The farther we go, the fresher the air seems, the more free and unfettered we feel, and the more our spirits rise. Then, when some three miles are traversed, we turn off the *puckah* road, and make our way across the wide, far-stretching plain, in the direction of a low line of hills that loom dimly in the distance; past cool-looking mango-groves; past native villages, whence a

truly Eastern odour (though not of roses) arises ; past wells, 'neath tall umbrageous peepul-trees, round which the village gossips are holding forth on their staple subject of conversation—to wit, *atta* (flour)—and where the village maidens in their bright blue and red *saris* add grace and colour to the groups. Past fields of tall reed-like millet and sugar-cane, and corn and cotton, till the first ten miles are past, and we see under the shade of yon scant baubul thorn our two relief-ponies. On to these we soon change and pursue our way, now jogging along quietly, now indulging in a good stretching gallop, and even on occasion giving vent to the exuberance of our animal spirits by larking over some little nullah or a thorn-and-straw-bound fence.

So the distance is gradually shortened, and by ten o'clock we reach our second stage. Here breakfast is awaiting us ; to this meal we do ample justice, and by the time it is over a good piece of news is in store for us. For see, yon dusky form that comes across the plain at a good jog-trot is the bearer of good news. Having in Eastern fashion made due obeisance, he proceeds to extract from the folds of a very dirty waist-cloth a note. 'Tis from our friend B——, saying he has heard of a good boar or two about half-way to camp ; that they (his party) have had a

“kill” by a tiger, and as they do not know when we shall arrive, they are going to beat for the tiger, and have left the hog for us; further, that they have made arrangements for the beaters to be all ready for us on arrival at Pipri—for so we will call the village—and wishing us good luck. Could anything be better? And what a good, thoughtful fellow we vote B——! Please the pigs, we will open our sporting campaign by fleshing our spears in the bodies of the unclean animal. So, forrard on!

A six-mile trot, and then a crowd gathered under a small grove of trees denote that we have arrived at the scene of action. Inquiry from our under-shikari elicits the satisfactory information that a sounder of hog containing one good boar has been safely harboured about a mile off, and that a small date-grove not far distant has been chosen by a solitary old boar (whose proportions are described as resembling those of a bullock) for his mid-day siesta.

We will take the sounder first, and accordingly take post at one end of the covert, and soon

“Shout and roar have stirred the boar,
And forced him forth to fly.”

See, yonder they go! their black backs bobbing up and down in the short grass. Hold hard one

minute, let them get clean away ; for the lusty old boar who belongs to the sounder is disposed to take matters more leisurely, and trots after his departing wives and children in a sort of confound-me-if-I-am-going-to-be-hurried manner.

One pull at your girths, one pressure of your finger-tip on the keen blade of your spear to make sure the point is sharp ; and now, if you are quite ready, "Ride !" Away bound our good Arabs, with cocked ears, their long tails, the proud flag of their race, streaming behind them. Stride for stride we gallop on, and the snort of our steeds and the thud of their hoof-strokes on the sun-baked soil is all the sound we hear. Nearer and nearer we draw, till but half-a-dozen lengths separate us from the boar, whom we have detached from the sounder. We are now going best pace, and are both, friends though we be, imbued with the keen spirit of rivalry. Fortune favours me, for my horse, having a greater turn of speed than yours, draws to the front. My spear is extended, for a moment the sunlight flashes on the glittering blade, the next moment it will be embedded behind yon bristly shoulders. But the race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong. As victory seems within my grasp, there is a wicked backward glance from the boar's little brown eye, a "Woof, woof,"

and turning so suddenly in his tracks as to almost lose his legs, he jinks to one side. Now, now is your chance. Ah! you have learnt your lesson well, I see; and your horse, who is more of a veteran than mine, understands his business; for, turning almost with the boar, he cuts in front of him, enabling you to meet his sidelong charge and gain the coveted "first spear." A few more charges, and then, fighting gallantly to the last, the old boar succumbs and is gathered to his fathers.

A good gallop and a plucky boar, we mutually agree; and when I have congratulated you, *mon ami*—for, after the first passing shade of annoyance at being defeated, as becomes a sportsman I forget my disappointment in your triumph—we dismount and measure our quarry. A 33-incher he proves, and with an 8-inch pair of tusks.

After washing out the mouths of our good steeds, and giving them half an hour's breathing-time, we remount, and proceed to beat up *le solitaire*. He, however, proves a surly old gentleman, and loath to leave his comfortable quarters, dodging backwards and forwards in the most annoying manner. This game goes on for at least a couple of hours, then unexpected assistance arrives in the shape of a troop of Lumbanis



"He jinks to one side."

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—a wandering gipsy tribe—who, with the aid of their powerful dogs, undertake to instil into the mind of the boar that it would be to his advantage to seek fresh fields and pastures new. This they certainly do, for after a short time out trots the old gentleman, followed by the yelping pack, though they take very good care to keep out of reach of his ivory tusks. The boar is evidently in a vile temper, as he champs his tusks, while the foam flies in thick flakes from his jaws. But at last he gets far enough from the covert for us to ride him. Not that it is much of a ride, however, for he is old and lusty, and half a mile pumps him. Then it is a case of “Come on, and be hanged to you!” for the boar pulls up under a baubul-thorn tree and charges me viciously—for again I have got the start of you. No jinking this time, and so I win the spear; an equable arrangement, and one that, true sportsman as you are, you will not object to. Again, though speared badly, he comes out, this time at you. Do not pull up, now; gallop at him. Ah! that was a good spear, and sped true, for you nearly turned over even the boar’s bulky carcass as your horse sheered off, and you were enabled to withdraw your spear. Twice more we circle round and meet in conflict—steel *versus* ivory; but cold steel wins the day, for the

gallant animal's last effort is but a staggering charge. He blunders on to his nose, recovers himself, a step or two more, then the mighty body sways heavily and topples over. A gasp or two, those sturdy limbs relax, and the brave spirit has fled.

"Butchery," some may say. "What pleasure can there be in sticking a pig?" Ah! my friend, you who have, though only in spirit, participated with me in the glorious delight of a good gallop, the mad frenzy of a charge, and derived the satisfaction of having outwitted and conquered the most plucky as well as one of the most crafty animals of the chase—you will not hold with such maudlin sentimentality, for you know the chances are even. It is a fair fight, a contest betwixt spear and tusk, reason and nerve pitted against cunning and pluck, and you will call to mind many occasions on which "tusk" had the best of the game. Nay, the legs of any old Arab or Waler hog-hunter will bear testimony to this latter fact from the scars that adorn them.

And now we will send on the carcasses to camp, the while we discuss our tiffin, and with pale ale or claret-cup wash the dust of the chase from our throats, whilst our horses are rubbed down and enjoy their mid-day feed, and then we will jog quietly on to camp. No; on second thoughts let



"Come on, and be hanged to you!"

us walk and shoot our way there. Our syces have our guns and rifles, and perchance we may get a shot at some black buck, ravine deer, or bustard. At any rate, we are certain to find a sprinkling of quail, painted partridge, and hares, with maybe the coveted prize of the Indian gunner, and as precious to him as a woodcock to his home brother, the shapely and game-looking floriken. These we all meet with,—some we bag, some we miss; but anyhow, as the sun sinks down beyond the crest of yon range of rugged hills whose base we now approach, and we catch a glimpse of the white walls of our tents, we have not a bad show of game.

The camp at last. Delightful word! How welcome the sight! how familiar seem all its details! Three "field-officers'" tents serve as our sleeping and dressing apartments, for we generally dine in the open—nay, some of us prefer sleeping outside in the soft, cool air, so refreshing after the heat of day. The camp is pitched beneath a banyan-tree, which assumes the appearance of a veritable thicket, sprawling after the manner of its kind over many a rood of ground, and forming quite a colony of its dependent roots. Look at the downward amplification of its sturdy tendrils, each of which will in time assume the proportions of the present

stem, sending out in its turn more branches and more tendrils. Are they not curious? —nay, more than curious, for they look at times like huge snakes, so twisted and gnarled are their shapes. Some one has said that, given time, a banyan-tree would by degrees extend from Cape Comorin to the foot of the Himalayas; that though the progress would of necessity be slow, time would not matter much to the tree, which would go steadily marching onwards, increasing and multiplying till its object was attained. And glancing at our individual tree, you can well believe this.

Let us take a glance round, and note the accessories of camp-life. There are our horses, those you and I rode just now, together with those of our friends, picketed a short way off, with their attendant syces rubbing them down and grooming them, and, let us hope, instituting a careful search for thorns; for in our late gallop we have brushed through some thorny scrub-jungle. Beyond, near a couple of small hill-tents which serve as shelter to our servants, is a country cart piled up with straw and *bhoosa*, with its pair of attenuated bullocks chewing the eternal cud of reflection. Farther off, some vicious-looking camels are pursuing much the same occupation; whilst looming dark in the shade

towers the giant form of an elephant, for we have been fortunate to get the loan of one. Very useful will the huge pachyderm be to us in the case of following up a wounded tiger. Servants are busy moving about on their masters' errands, guns and rifles are leaning against the tent-walls, whilst some brass basins on their tripod-stands seem to act as sentinels over them. A table with a snowy cloth and some comfortable cane lounging-chairs give an air of comfort to the scene; whilst not far off, a pile of logs, destined to form our post-prandial fire, attests the fact that the nights are chilly. Out in the open farther away there is a little group gathered. They are the village *chumars* busy skinning a tiger our friends have shot. By to-morrow noon there will be naught remaining of that lithe and muscular body, for the jackals at night and the vultures by day will pick the skeleton perfectly clean. Near the servants' tents the carcasses of our two boars, a black buck, and a couple of chital, or spotted deer, are dependent by their heels from a branch; whilst floriken, hares, partridge, quail, and pea-fowl also form items of our larder, and will all contribute their quota towards that best of all dishes—a real “hunter's stew.”

And now night approaches, not with the gradually lessening footsteps of an English evening and

its delicious gloaming that speaks a lingering farewell, but suddenly and with a bound, for there is no twilight in the East. A short half-hour, and night is an accomplished fact. The fox-bats have unhung themselves from the topmost branches of the banyan-tree, and are gliding through the air like dim shadowy ghosts; the camp-fires burn up brightly, shedding a ruddy glow on the dusky forms of our followers; the nightjars give forth their curious cry; and ere another two or three hours are past, the camp will be hushed in the silence of sleep. Only the voices of the night will be abroad; and as we lie on our beds gazing up through the matted foliage at the twinkling stars above, and thinking perhaps of home, the only sounds that break on our ears will be the "*kubber-dar*" and nervous cough of the watchman—he whose duty it is to scare off any prowling jackal, or give notice by his monotonous cry to any brother thief that blackmail has already been paid to the community, and that he must exercise other fields for his felonious talents. Or maybe the snort and impatient stamp of a horse, followed by a low sonorous growl from the dark background of the jungle, will advise us that a tiger is abroad and on his nightly prowl. Ah! a sound this which, once heard, will not easily be forgotten. Even the slumbering sportsman,

wearied with his day's exertions, will start up and long that it were day in order that he might try conclusions with the monarch of the jungle. Then the watch-fires will blaze up, and the coughs and "*kubber-dars*" will increase and become louder, more sustained, and more nervously ejaculated, till once more the god Somnus spreads his enchanted wings o'er us, and you and I will doze off, perhaps to dream of Indian sport and the delights of camp-life in general, and hear again in our sleep the stirring cry "*Wuh! jata!*" No unpleasant dream, believe me, and one which even in after-years you would at times fain indulge in.



"*Wuh! jata!*"

CHAPTER XI.

A SOLITARY HUNT.

THE unattainable is always what we long for most. It is only human, and when we have once partaken of a sport of which we were enthusiastic devotees, and can no longer indulge in it, its delights seem the more enhanced. Such sentiments will be re-echoed by many an old hog-hunter who now finds solace in pursuing the fox at home. Not that I wish to decry fox-hunting as a sport, but personally I must confess it ranks second to hog-hunting in my mind. I have seen good sport with both, some of the best of both, but I plump for the pig. We dwell with delight, no doubt, on many a good run with hounds at home, but how memory flies back when we gaze at a pair of tusks, mere little bits of curved ivory though they be! How the whole scene comes back to us, and how vividly each incident, every yard of the run, every turn of the hog, and his wicked glance of rage and defiance, stand im-

printed on our memory ! We can feel once more our gallant horse, every whit as keen as his rider, doing his level best to earn for him the coveted first spear ; hear once more the boar's gruff grunt as he either jinks or charges home, as the case may be. Yes, imagination pictures all the old scenes vividly, and we feel our pulse quicken, our heart beat the faster, and our eye fixed as we dwell affectionately on the past.

Naturally the cream of every sport lies in competition and being first ; for as Captain Morris of the 9th Bombay Native Infantry, the poet-laureate of hog-hunting, aptly sings in one of his stirring ballads :—

“ Oh, then, fail not to be at your post !
For though hunting's my pleasure and pride,
Yet the charm of the chase is half lost
If we have not a rival to ride.”

The sentiment is true, yet many a sportsman will recall some bit of solitary shikar, some lonely gallop and tussle, which will perhaps stand out more clear in his memory than other incidents which occurred in company. Such a scuffle I now propose to relate ; and as the firelight flashes on the spurs and spears in my snuggerly at times, I can apply the lines—

“ My spurs and spear were truest friends
I e'er could call my own.”

It happened thus. The Hunt-book had come round in due course for members to inscribe their names as intending to hunt two days after at Sonegaon, a spot some eighteen miles from Kamptee. Several names were down promising a fair muster of spears, and to those already inscribed I added mine. Owing to casualties I had only two horses that I could hunt, and one of these I had to lay out as a hack to carry me the last six miles of the journey and be my second horse, whilst a borrowed tat did the first twelve.

How well I remember the ride out; the cup of hot coffee and bit of toast eaten by candlelight as I pulled on boots and breeches; the morning pipe as I trotted along the cantonment road, and then, getting clear of houses as the first streak of light appeared in the east, swung along at a hard canter for a couple of miles, and leaving the *kun-kur* metalled road, launched out across country, making my way by well-known landmarks!

How fresh the morning air seemed, how delightful to get out of cantonments, and how much there was to note in animal and bird life! Here a herd of antelope, who stood and stared at me before loping off with stotting bounds; there a brace of sneaking jackals, looking excessively dissipated, and as if they had been "making a night of it" somewhere; whilst, as I scrambled in and

out of a nullah, I disturbed that pretty graceful little animal an Indian fox, intent on hunting beetles or some such small game. Away out on the *maidan* near a small patch of *rumnah* grass stalked a lordly bustard, whilst the tops of the grain in a *bajri* field were alive with a swinging, chattering mob of green parrots. But I am not writing about natural history—merely a trifling sporting incident ; so to that let me get “forrard.”

The little tat that had carried me the first part of my journey was lathering freely by the time I reached the village where my other mount was waiting me, and on this fresh horse the remaining six miles to Sonegaon were soon accomplished. At last the white walls of the Hunt mess-tent, pitched beneath a giant banyan-tree, greeted me, and I was soon beneath the grateful shade.

An *al fresco* tub—i.e., being well soused with water by the attendant *bhisti*—then breakfast and a pipe, whilst Manajee, the Hunt shikari, came to make his report. This was favourable—to wit, a good sounder of pig marked down among some stony grass-covered hills about two miles distant.

Ten o'clock, half-past eleven, and no signs of any one else turning up ; so, as beaters had been collected and had gone on, I determined to wait

another half-hour, and then, if no other sportsman arrived, to have a beat on my own account. No one came, so I started off, reaching the ground about noon. It was not exactly the sort of place one would have selected to ride a pig alone. Undulating low hills stretched away for many a mile, covered with loose rolling stones, and yellow withered grass some two feet high. In parts, patches of scrub-jungle and sheet-rock cropped up; whilst here and there, where the hillsides were steep, they were riven and fissured by crevices, which, if a hunted pig once gained, would cause much trouble to a solitary pursuer, and offer decided means of concealment to the hog. In the little valleys and on the table-lands numerous nullahs increased the difficulties; added to all, it was a fearfully hot day, and there was not a particle of shade nearer than the camp. The outlook was discouraging, but I had not ridden out eighteen miles for nothing; so telling Manajee to get the beaters in line, I cantered off to a little knoll from whence I could command a good view of the ground to be beaten.

I had not to wait long, and it did not need the excited shouts of the beaters, "*Wuh! jata! Wuh! jata hai!*" ("There they go!") to tell me that game was afoot, for I caught sight of seven or eight black forms bobbing away through the

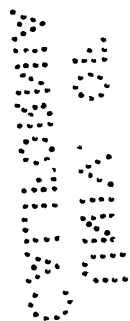
grass about 300 yards to my left front. My horse, an old Arab, knew what was up as soon as I did, and from his pricked ears, fixed eyeballs, distended nostrils, and the quiver of excitement that shot through him, he was evidently every whit as keen for the fray as his rider. The pig were bending slightly towards me; so, sinking the hill on which I had been standing, I cantered across a small valley, and ascended another rise in the ground. As I reached the top, there were my friends, eight of them, having pulled up, and no doubt thinking how clever they had been. But directly I appeared on the scene, "a change came o'er the spirit of their dream;" with a chorus of grunts they scattered right and left, and I had no difficulty in selecting the most rideable pig—viz., a nice active young boar of about thirty-one inches. To him accordingly I laid in, and a smart spin he gave me for half to three-quarters of a mile over the most abominably rough ground, where, clever as my old horse was, he had to do his best to keep on his legs. Twice I had almost closed with the boar, but both times a sharp jink threw me out, and after the last I lost sight of him amid some low scrub-jungle. The beaters, of course, were a long way behind, and the nature of the ground precluded my putting out any flag-wallahs, so I had only myself to depend on. I was meditating

what line the boar would be most likely to have taken, when I caught sight of a little pool, or rather puddle, of water some distance on. "Ten to one he has gone to have a roll in the water," I thought, and cantered on. My surmise was correct, for on reaching the spot there was my friend just emerging from a nice mud-and-water bath, and looking anything but pleased to see me. The ground was now more in my favour, and closing with him on one of the numerous slopes, I speared. Unfortunately I was using one of those abominations, a diamond-shaped spear-blade, and the projecting corners got stuck between the boar's ribs. This naturally irritated the animal, and he made furious efforts to get at my horse, whilst I hung on to the spear. This game continued for perhaps a minute, when my horse suddenly let fly with both heels at the boar, knocking him over and nearly unseating me. Some perhaps will say that as I was alone, and had plenty of time to choose a favourable opportunity for delivering a telling spear, I should have waited, and not attacked on such awkward ground. Perhaps I ought, but my fear was that if I did not close as soon as possible, I might again lose sight of the boar.

To resume. The boar picked himself up and with a surly grunt trotted off, the spear still sticking in him, and wobbling about as he went.



"Suddenly let fly with both heels at the boar."



After going some fifty or sixty yards, however, it fell out, and trotting on, I dismounted, regained my weapon, and again spurred in pursuit. Again I closed with the boar, and again on sloping ground, where much the same sort of scene was enacted, my horse using both fore and hind feet on the boar with great effect. At last one of my stirrup-leathers broke, and I had to let go of the spear and get out of the way of the now infuriated boar, who retired higher up the hill, and lay down amongst some rocks and thick scrub. To attack on horseback in such a place was impossible, so I waited till the beaters and Manajee hove in sight, which they did before long, and then getting a fresh spear, and accompanied by Manajee, we crawled in under the bushes. At last I reached an open spot where I could stand upright, and no sooner had I done so than out charged my friend with an angry "woof, woof" right on to my spear, which I had just time to bring down to the charge. The impetus of his onslaught staggered me, but I managed to keep him off till Manajee rammed his spear into him, and then, whilst he fended off the boar, I disengaged my weapon, and plunging it in behind the shoulder, this gallant young boar rolled slowly over, and expired with a last surly grunt of defiance.

I shall never forget the heat when the excite-

ment of the scuffle was over. I think I would have given a £5-note for a good drink, and of course the man with the tiffin-basket was more than a mile away ! So ramming my head under a bush, I sent off my pugree to be soaked in water where the boar had rolled, and tried to be patient till it was brought back and I could moisten my head. My horse had been slightly cut on both hind-legs, and feeling rather exhausted, I determined not to beat any more. Besides, I had a long ride back to cantonments, and did not wish to disturb more ground.

A tub, tiffin, and a nap in camp worked wonders, and I rode back the eighteen miles to Kamp-tee, getting in in time for mess at 8 P.M., very well satisfied with my day's sport.

Ah me ! how it all comes back to one ! and what would I not give once more to revisit those jungle haunts ! Dear old jungles, with your rocks, your trees, your waving *rumnah* grass, how full you seem to me even now of the happy memories of youth ! How haunted you are with the shades of tiger, panther, and boar, and how from your whispering leaves, yellow grass, and sun-baked soil come the voices of long ago ! Well, 'tis said "*Tout vient à qui sait attendre.*" Perhaps my day of shikar may come once more ; if it does, I can only trust that of the boars I shall meet—

"May their pluck be as good, their speed as well tried,
As his who that day at Sonegaon died."

And now, as an instance of how hog run almost the same line year after year, let me quote from a letter lately received from a friend at Nagpore—a letter that has brought back the old days very vividly to me, and made me suffer from that disease known as "hog-fever," an epidemic almost as bad as the "influenza." This is what my friend says:—

"I resolved not to do any hog-hunting till Christmas; but when I heard I could not get away for that meet, I took the first opportunity of beginning at once. We met at Hingna, ten miles west of Nagpore, and raised about 150 beaters out of the adjacent villages. We beat the Jytolla or Sheongaon *bhirs* (these, I think, appear as the Sonegaon *bhirs* in the old Hunt records) from the western end. The grass is fearfully long and is only cut in patches, so our difficulties were considerably increased. When we got to the big corrie (the same that you had your solitary fight with a boar from) two hog were on foot. I was posted at the bottom end of the nullah—viz., at its mouth—when I heard the cheery '*Jata hai!*' which with us takes the place of Tally-ho! I set old Bravo going. A mad scramble over the side of the corrie, a peck,

a recovery, and then, with my heart in my mouth, I reached the top. Arrived there I saw flags waving in all directions. Luckily I rode the right line, though it was through grass up to my waist, and got on to the *maidan* between the *bhir* and Sheongaon. One moment to cast my eyes round, and there, half a mile away, I spotted a good boar—he looked as big as a donkey—blobbing up the slope of the opposite hill. In go the spurs. Dear old Bravo! he hardly needed the incentive, for he was into his stride and away at full speed almost at once. But we had much leeway to make up over awfully stony ground, and a dark, sinuous streak ahead denoted a rocky nullah. As we galloped on I noted for the first time the presence of a rival, whom I had hitherto unnoticed, and who was not fifty yards behind the boar. He had been hidden from my view by a dip in the ground in front of the nullah, which I was now nearing. ‘How deep is it? Too wide to jump!’ Such the thought that flashes through my brain as I take a pull at Bravo. Nobly the good horse shortens his stride, drops like a cat on to the sheet-rock in the bed of the nullah, and scrambling up the opposite bank, I feel the relief engendered by being carried safely over a nasty place. Now ‘ferrard on,’ good horse; let us see what we are

worth, for we are on rideable ground, and, please the shades of all hog, the 'spear' has not yet been claimed. Up the hill we climb, catching sight of the boar and his pursuer, who has now dropped a bit behind. Then through a field of low and thin *juwari*, and the boar inclines to the right, feeling that he cannot reach the *sendbund* at Sheongaon. And so he sets his head for a small solitary hill to the south of the corrie. On, ever on, and right well does Bravo swing over a bit of boggy ground in his stride. He might indeed have been bred on Exmoor or Dartmoor by his prescience of such places, and I see W——, who is now close on the boar, lean forward to take the spear. You know the agony of such moments, when a rival bids fair to rob you of what you have ridden hard for. You will sympathise with me, and perhaps the more when I tell you that the boar jinked twice and let me up at last. 'Have you speared?' 'No,' comes back in tones low and muttered. Now, Bravo, now! A quickened stride; we get almost level; a big, burly form crosses right in front of me at right angles, and—I just manage to prick him and draw blood! 'Woof, woof,' and the angry boar now comes round at W——, who gives him a good spear. Then it is my turn for a charge, and I get a good spear in behind the shoulder,

as with crest erect he charges in sideways. *Habet!* No more running now; he halts under a small bush very considerably, for we are all glad of a breather, but almost before we have time to take one, a wild dazed look takes the place of the former wicked gleam in his eye, his hind-quarters give way, he totters, tries to regain his feet, and with a last savage look and a grunt of defiance he rolls slowly over, and is gathered to his fathers. No need of that last spear-thrust, his fighting days are over, and—‘Whoo-whoop!’—he is dead.

“The field now came up, but the fun was over. What a glorious gallop it was, and how many the explanations and regrets of those who were not lucky enough to participate in it, as we gathered round our first boar of the season! And he was not such a monster after all—just under 30 inches measured as he lay—but he had the soul of a hero. The other pig that broke was unseen by the riders, and though we beat in every conceivable direction we failed to find again. The beaters were rewarded with double pay as an incentive, not only to give us *khubber* of hog, but to come and beat on a future occasion. You will acknowledge this was diplomacy.

“So we jogged home well satisfied with the

day's sport and the first boar of the season. I've spun a long yarn, but I know you at least will like to read it, and I hope be able to follow the run over my sheet of paper, for these lines will recur to you—

“‘Then of those days we'll often think,
And run our runs once more ;
To old companions we will drink,
And toast the mighty boar.’”

Truly, my friend, I will, and so will many an old comrade who has tasted the delights of hog-hunting. I know the line of your run right well, and can picture it clearly. Would to Diana I could “lay into a hog” with you and your cheery comrades once more !



“Of those days we'll often think.”

CHAPTER XII.

MY THIRTY-FOUR-INCHER.

YES! as I look on these four little pieces of ivory, and the firelight glances on the spear-heads that guard them on either side, a proud day comes back to me. Who does not know—I mean, what sportsman who has achieved success does not feel his pulse throb and his heart beat as he recalls some individual day on which his star was in the ascendant, when he triumphed and earned—in his own mind, if in no one else's—fame? I am not egotistical. I do not want to blow my own trumpet, or vaunt any particular prowess of my own, for my success on this occasion was very commonplace, and it was attributable to Dame Fortune bestowing her favours more lavishly on me than on my comrades that I won those ivory tushes, and put a “first spear” to my credit. And yet, though years have passed, my eye

will stray to the wall on which they hang, and I cannot—no, I cannot—help feeling just a *leetle* bit cocky. You would too, my friend, I'll be bound, though perhaps you may, after having read so far, and glanced on to the end of my scribbling, dismiss the subject with a "pish and a pshaw!" Well, do so if you like; but for the sake of sport, which I will wager we *both* love, though perhaps differently, bear with me, I pray you; and if you be sociable, light another weed, fill up your glass, and try to read the prosings of an old hog-hunter.

First, an you be unlearned as to the relative size of Indian boar (*Sus cristatus*), let me enlighten you a little, for I have no wish to pose as the slayer of a hog of abnormal size. A 34-inch boar is undoubtedly a good one and above the average; but yet hundreds of better ones have been, and will be, killed. Take the records of any Tent Club, and draw your own conclusions. Read Major Baden-Powell's fascinating (to the hog-hunter's mind) volume on 'Hog-Hunting,' or Mr Simson's 'Sport in Eastern Bengal,' or any annals of hog-hunting lore, and my modest performance will shrivel into insignificance. Nay, it was but the other day that, in answer to a query on my part as to the

relative size of hog, I received a letter from an old and enthusiastic Bengal hog-hunter, in which he said: "I have turned up old notes, and find such records in 1854, '55, '56. Two boars, each 36 inches; one boar, $37\frac{1}{2}$ inches; two boars, 38 inches; one, 39 inches; one, $40\frac{1}{2}$ inches; one, 42 inches; one, $43\frac{1}{2}$ inches. These were all got in the districts of Singapore and Rungpore. In those days we never took the trouble to ride a pig unless we thought he was over 30 inches. The best pig-sticking meet I was ever at was two days in March 1855, at a place called Tromboolee, about half-way between Dinagepur and Moulda, where in two days we got fifteen boars, varying from 33 to $43\frac{1}{2}$ inches in height. The $43\frac{1}{2}$ -incher never ran a yard. We found him in a small patch of high grass-jungle. He charged every one that rode into it, and cut three horses badly. We put the elephants in to beat down the grass round him, but he turned them out more than once, and at last they left him in a small patch about big enough to just hold him, and there he stood and fought like a hero till we killed him with repeated spears. A truly big and great-hearted boar. His tusks, I remember, were not particularly large; but he was himself a monster, and very fat and heavy."

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Now this latter paragraph brings up the length of tushes—ah! there I think I score. Not that I mean to advance for a moment those that erstwhile adorned the grim visage of my former foe are a “record” pair by any means—far from it, as you may see if you visit the hall of the East India United Service Club in St James’s Square—but they are *above the average*, and what is more, the second best pair obtained in the Nagpore Hunt, of which I was a member. Ah, what would I not give to be out there and at the game again! But you will say, “Shut up, driveller!” and I will bow humbly to your mandate and come back to the day in question, when I got “six to four” the best of the “34-incher.”

It was in the rains, or rather just when they were ceasing, and the whole country looked fresh and green, whilst the clouded sky and moist steamy atmosphere were a relief from the dry parching heat and winds of the hot weather. It was but the second meet of the season, and only five spears had turned up, all keen to be at their favourite sport once more. The scene of operations was a long stretch of partial cultivation and black-cotton soil, varied with stretches of *rumnah* grass, whilst the dead level of the surrounding plain was broken here and

there by sundry rocky scrub-jungle-covered hills. Truly, indeed, did we after breakfast sally forth, and

“With hope elate, anticipate
To see the grey boar die.”

But, alas! for many hours our hopes were unrewarded. *Bhir* and *rumnah* were beaten fruitlessly, or held no rideable hog, and by 3 P.M. the prospects of a gallop looked very gloomy. We had, indeed, started a sow or two attended by their litters of little striped “squeakers,” but as yet no gleam of tusk had revealed the presence of a rideable boar. So the five who composed our party were straggling on in front of the beaters to try a small patch of grass-jungle as a forlorn-hope.

You all know what it is with hounds at home when you draw covert after covert blank, and no note of hound sends your heart into your mouth, and makes your nerves tingle! At such moments we are apt to curse the uncertainty of fox-hunting, to almost forswear allegiance to the good cause, and mutter something about “stag” and “drag.” Then when patience is wellnigh exhausted comes the scream of the whipper-in, followed by the merry chorus of hounds, and heigh! *presto!* all our woes are forgotten, and

we—well, fill in the rest as you like. I warrant me you will have plenty of material stored up in your memory wherewith to do so. So it happened now. A tremendous hubbub from the coolie crowd behind, excited cries of "*Wuh jata ! wuh jata !*" ("There he goes!"), and then we catch sight of a black burly form lumbering along at a holding pace over the plain. What a monster he is ! and even though he is some distance from us, we can yet catch a gleam of white about his mouth that denotes his tushes will be worthy trophies.

It happened that H—— and I were the rear-most of the party, and walking along smoking, when the boar, disturbed by the near approach of some chattering coolies, had started up from under a bush where he had been enjoying a siesta. Natives love making a row, and as we swung into our saddles and snatched our spears from the hands of attendant syces, a regular volley of yells rent the air, and made the boar increase his pace and set his head for a rocky bush-covered hill some one and a half to two miles distant ; so there was no time to get together and wait for the order to " Ride ! " The position in rear that H—— and I were occupying gave us a start, and away we went best pace, H—— on a Waler (hitherto untried at pig),

and I on an old Arab named Parachute, a veteran hog-hunter. The boar had got a good start, which was further increased from the fact of our having been on foot when he was reared, so we had a mile of hard galloping before we got on terms with him. This we at last did where a strip of detached bushes led towards the hill. "Now I've got you, my friend," I thought, as with a couple of lengths' lead of H—— I made my effort; but the old boar, bulky and obese though he was, proved wonderfully active, and jinking right across me, turned to H—— Oh, the agony of that moment! The thought of losing those splendid tushes was maddening, even though my rival was the best and dearest friend I had in the world. So much for the selfishness of human nature! H——, however, failed in his effort. His horse, terrified at the unwonted sight of the great bristly monster, sheered off, and good horseman though H—— was, not all his most persuasive eloquence of hand and heel could bring Ajax up to the scratch. Once more I got on terms, and as the pig was evidently getting blown, success seemed certain. Nearer I crept up, and as I settled myself more firmly in the saddle, and hand closed on the spear-shaft, I felt the boar was at my mercy. Two or three more strides would do it, and

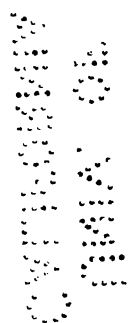
beyond a patch of low scrub and grass that we must gallop through ; then the "spear" would be won, when—crash ! in we went into an old concealed pit ! But Parachute was wonderfully quick on his legs ; the pit was not deep, and though he pitched on his head and shot me on to his neck, he recovered himself admirably, and with a scramble, which shot me back into the saddle, we floundered out ! This *contretemps* had, however, deprived me of my pride of place, and once more I saw H—— closing with the pig, who had by now nearly reached the base of the hill which had been his point from the first. He was evidently done to a turn, and could only raise a trot as H—— bore up. The craven spirit of Ajax, however, failed him again, as with bristles raised and a "Woof, woof" the boar came at him. Once more he sheered off, and lost his rider the chance, and turning, the boar scrambled up the hill. "Now, old horse, one more effort," I muttered as I made a dash after the pig. The ground was terribly rough — rocks and stones were scattered broadcast—and the ascent steep ; but Parachute answered nobly to my call, and just as the boar reached some thick scrub about four feet high I leant right out of the saddle and speared. Then a blunder, and a recovery, and the boar had disappeared ! Nothing more could

be done. The ground was unrideable, and the density of the jungle precluded all hope of coming on the boar by chance ; so there was nothing for it but to reach the top of the hill by a little path, and there wait till either the beaters came up or the boar left his stronghold. The latter I had not much faith in his doing, for he had gained a safe sanctuary which he would be loath to leave, and I knew I had given him a telling spear ; and so we waited till, some three-quarters of an hour later, whilst the line of beaters were beating round the opposite side of the hill, they came on the boar lying dead under a big rock. No very wonderful day's sport this, perhaps ; but as I read its record in my Shikar Diary, and see the brief note, "One boar, 34 inches, tushes $9\frac{1}{4}$ inches," memory goes back to the dear old days, which will probably never return—for me and two of the party who were out—and I find myself humming the lines :—

"Then pass round the cup, come, pledge me a toast,
To the 'spears' and the tushes of which we can boast ;
To the comrades of youth, the 'rumnah,' the 'bheer' ;
The horses we rode, the crimson-stained spear ;
The gallop, the charge, the fight at the end ;
And just one more to each absent friend.
In sorrow, in mirth, when your heart may be sore,
Believe me, there's nought like a 'Bout with a Boar' !"



"The boar lying dead under a big rock."



CHAPTER XIII.

THE SONG OF THE SPEAR ; OR, A LAY OF
THE NAGPORE HUNT.

MEMORY is a great thing, a food of which we never weary, appetising and strengthening. So as firelight flashes on spear-blade and tusk, or skin, antlers, and trophies of shikar, gained when youth, strength, and energy were yet ours, it brings back the days of long ago, with all their charm, fresh and distinct, and once more we live in the past ; once more feel the bounding stride of the game horse under us ; once more hear the shouts of the beaters, and feel the hot air of an Indian morn ; once more feel our blood surge up as we embark in the mad rivalry of a race for first spear, and hear the boar's gruff grunt of defiance as he charges home ; and are once more—young again. So, is not memory a friend ? Surely it is, a true and trusty one, one to be hugged to our bosom and clung to ; for when other friends desert us, memory will help us through many an hour of trouble and sorrow.

I.

Without, the snow comes whirling fast,
And loudly shrieks the northern blast;
Within, above the embers dying low
The clock chimes out with rhythm slow
The solemn midnight hour.

II.

'Tis the hour when the dim forms of ghosts
Creep forth in all their countless hosts,
And with laugh and jest high revel keep,
Whilst all the world lies wrapt in sleep,
Till the bright dawn breaks forth.

III.

I was not erst condemned to stand
Unnoticed thus in a distant land,
Uncared for, but by him who bore
Me in his dexter hand of yore
Through many a gallant fight.

IV.

No worm then bored through my bamboo tough,
Nor had the red rust with its mantle rough
Enwrapped my blade. I was a source of pride
To the master that owned me, who loved the word "Ride!"
The signal to chase the wild boar.

V.

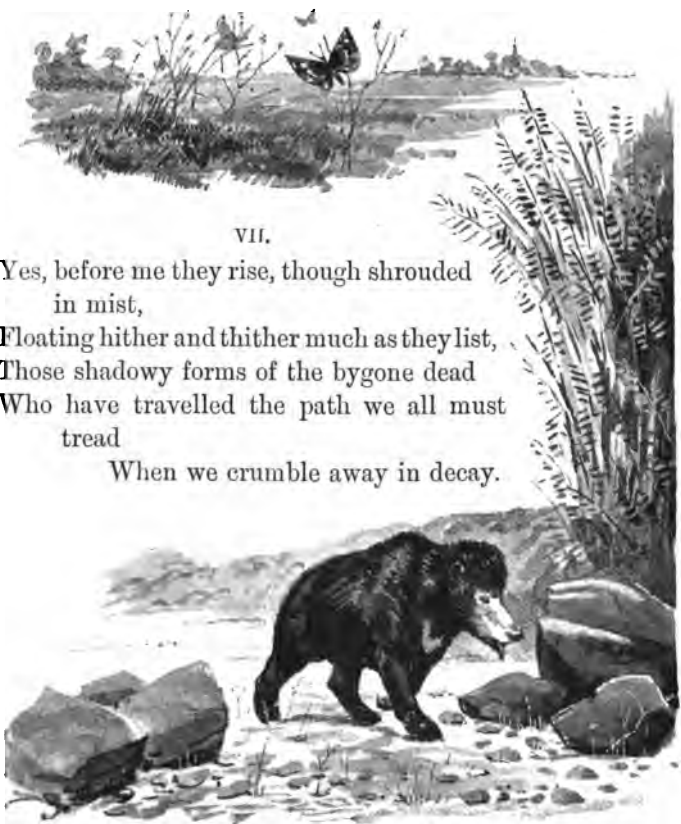
But *his* day is gone. No longer, I ween,
Shall he balance my blade so sharp and so keen,
Or redden its point in the crimson gore,
That flows from the veins of an old grey boar,
At the end of a rattling run.

VI.

Ah me! 'Tis better, they say,
To have lived only once, if but for a day,
Like ephemeral insect floating on wings,
Than not at all; for surely it brings
 Memories that ne'er can die!

VII.

Yes, before me they rise, though shrouded
 in mist,
Floating hither and thither much as they list,
Those shadowy forms of the bygone dead
Who have travelled the path we all must
 tread
 When we crumble away in decay.



VIII.

See! from yonder jungle creeps there forth
A spotted panther's form! In wrath
His eyes gleam fierce with a subtle glare;
Whilst beyond, that shaggy mass of hair
Covers a black bear's form!

IX.

And now a ceaseless stream of hog
Pours forth, and, splashing through yon bog,
Makes for the *rumnah* to the right.
Ah! surely 'tis a gallant sight
To view their bristly backs!

X.

Led by a grim grisly monster grey,
In the distance, lo! they vanish away,
To be followed soon by numbers more;
There! you can count them by the score
As they lumber over the plain.

XI.

Oh, I hold such a sight rouses the fire
Of my sporting spirit, for I'd never tire
Of biting deep through sinew and muscle
In a headlong charge at the end of a tussle
With the king of jungle—the Boar!

XII.

I trow that every sportsman must feel
Such a foe is worthy of his steel,
And speaking as that *steel*, I swear
There's no beast of the chase that can compare
To the Indian Boar, as a foe!

XIII.

Then gather around me, dear shades of the past,
 Linger a moment while night shall yet last;
 Let us live for a space our lives o'er again,
 Enjoy all their fun, forget all their pain,
 Grasping only their joys!



XIV.

And thou, O tusky monster grim!
 And younger boar of form more
 slim,
 Fight out with me on Warree's
 rocky hill
 The contest that ended in a kill,
 And crimsoned me with gore!

XV.

And "Ghonee's" panther,
 come thou forth!
 Skulk not away, display thy
 wrath,
 As once thou didst in days gone
 past,
 When 'neath thy cruel fangs thy victim last
 Fell bleeding to the ground!



XVI.

Shades of all hog from "Baila" to "Chandkee,"
Come forth in your swarms from "Khoppa" and "Gojee,
From mountain and corrie, from *rumnah* and plain,
For the sake of "Lang Syne" we'll have once again
Just one scuffle more !

XVII.

But now the grey dawn is slowly up creeping,
And soon through the window old *Sol* will be peeping ;
So farewell to you all, to those far and near,
Though in life we were foes, in death ye are dear,
Adieu till we meet once again !

NOTE TO CHAPTER III.

SINCE chapter iii. of Part I. went to press, two letters have appeared in the 'Asian' which have caused me to alter my opinion to a certain extent, though they corroborate in other respects what I have said, as they are written by sportsmen of unimpeachable authority. As they are of much interest, I append an extract from the first, which appeared in the 'Asian' of March 3, 1893. It is written by the Maharajah of Cooch Behar, dated "Shooting Camp, 26th February 1893," and is as follows:

"I wish to reopen the question of length and weight of tigers. I do not believe myself in the existence of tigers over 10 feet 4 inches, unless in very few and far-between instances, when a tiger may be met with which possibly measures an inch or two longer.

"The largest ever shot in these parts [the Duars and Terai] is 10 feet $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches only. The largest tiger as usually measured is not necessarily the biggest, as the tail is a large factor. I take the body measurements, the height (general bulk), girth, and weight, as being the true criterion of the size of tigers.

"The following table will, I venture to think, clearly show what I mean:—

	Weight in lb.	Length.	Body length.	Girth in inches.	Height in inches.	Head, weight in lb.	Upper arm in inches.	Forearm in inches.
Tiger	Not weighed	ft. in.	ft. in.					
"	536	10 1 $\frac{1}{2}$	7 0 $\frac{1}{2}$	54 $\frac{3}{4}$	44 $\frac{3}{4}$	40 $\frac{1}{2}$	29	21
"	530	10 0	6 11	52	40	36 $\frac{3}{4}$	26	21
"	512	10 2 $\frac{1}{2}$	7 0	48 $\frac{1}{2}$	39 $\frac{1}{2}$	38 $\frac{1}{2}$	26 $\frac{1}{2}$	20
"	493	9 10	6 7 $\frac{1}{2}$	52	39	36	26	19 $\frac{3}{4}$
"	492	10 0 $\frac{1}{2}$	6 11	54 $\frac{1}{2}$	38	38	27 $\frac{1}{2}$	20
"	481	9 7	6 7	50 $\frac{1}{2}$	40 $\frac{3}{4}$	39	28	18
"	467	9 6	6 5	52	38	37	29	19
"	455	9 8	6 9	52 $\frac{3}{4}$	40 $\frac{1}{2}$	38 $\frac{3}{4}$	29	18 $\frac{1}{2}$
"	450	9 6	6 6	52	39	35	26	18
"	453	10 0	6 6	52	42 $\frac{1}{2}$	35	29	18 $\frac{1}{2}$
"	550	9 8	6 11	48 $\frac{1}{2}$	41 $\frac{1}{2}$	36	26 $\frac{1}{2}$	18 $\frac{1}{2}$
"	445	10 2	7 0	50 $\frac{1}{2}$	36	37	27	18 $\frac{1}{2}$
"	Not weighed	10 0	6 10	51	42 $\frac{1}{2}$	38 $\frac{1}{2}$	28	19 $\frac{1}{2}$
"	"	9 9 $\frac{1}{2}$	6 7 $\frac{1}{4}$	54	40	34	29	18 $\frac{3}{4}$
Tygress	360	9 3	6 3	41	39	36	26	19 $\frac{1}{2}$
"	343	9 3 $\frac{1}{2}$	6 2 $\frac{1}{4}$	41	34	30	22	16
					38 $\frac{3}{4}$	31	23	15 $\frac{1}{2}$

"The last tigress of which measurements are given in the table is a record as regards length. She was killed here on the 20th inst." (February 1893).

Writing in the 'Asian' of March 17, 1893, from Purneah, dated March 13, 1893, Mr Fred. A. Shillingford says:—

"All sportsmen ought to be grateful to the Maharajah of Cooch Behar for the very interesting and valuable table of weights and measurements of tigers he has taken the pains to record and give to the public in your issue of 3d instant, and only a few further particulars were needed to make that table complete—namely, the dimensions of the skulls. Here is a table giving the measure-

Number.	Date shot.	Length of body.		Length of tail.		Total length, sportsman style.		Height.	Weight.	Length of skull.	Palatal measure from tip of snout to anterior edge of foramen magnum.	Malar measure, being width across zygomatic arches.
		ft.	in.	ft.	in.	ft.	in.	ft.	lb.			
1	19-4-71	7	8	3	4	11	0	3	7	...	15.25"	12.25"
2	6-7-82	7	3	3	6½	10	9½	3	7	...	15.00"	12.00"
3	17-3-84	7	3	3	5½	10	8½	3	8½	...	...	...
4	23-9-84	7	1	3	5	10	6	3	5	...	...	...
5	24-8-85	6	6½	3	6	10	0½	3	6	...	...	...
6	5-2-88	6	5	3	5	9	10	3	9	520.8	14.25"	11.81"
		7	0½	3	1	10	1½	3	8½	...	...	...
		6	11	3	1	10	0	3	4	536	...	...
		7	0	3	2½	10	2½	3	3½	530	...	...
		6	11	3	1½	10	0½	3	2½	493	...	...
		6	11	3	1	10	0	3	5½	453	...	...
		7	0	3	2	10	2	3	6½	455	...	...

ments of half-a-dozen large tigers shot in Purneah, as compared with the first six tigers, 10 feet and over, given in the Maharajah's list. The reason measurements of larger tigers are given when smaller ones would have

afforded a better comparison, is that only some of the largest ones have the lengths of their bodies and tails separately recorded and their heights noted in my journal. The skull measurements of No. 6 tiger appear large, but they were taken from the fresh skull with the flesh boiled off, as it was given to a friend just going home.

"The first point that will strike every one is the extreme shortness of the tails of the Bhutan Terai tigers as compared with those of the plains of Purneah; and that the hill-tiger is stouter built, with a shorter tail, than the tiger of the plains, is, I think, admitted on all sides. The average length of the tails of the six Purneah tigers is 3 feet 5.3 inches, against 3 feet 1.5 inches for the Cooch Behar ones, while the average length of their bodies differs by less than 2 inches. Of course the extra size of the tigers is accountable for part of this difference. The heaviest tiger in the Cooch Behar list, weighing 550 lb., was 9 feet 8 inches in length, and stood only 3 feet high—he had probably dined 'not wisely but too well.' The unaccountable variations in height of all the tigers is very puzzling, as all the Purneah tigers are measured between perpendiculars, and so I fancy are the Cooch Behar ones, hence there is less chance of error. Mr R. A. Sterndale in his 'Mammalia of India' says, in speaking of measurements of tigers, that 'bones cannot err,' and every sportsman generally preserves the skull as a trophy. It would be interesting if dimensions, taken with metal callipers, of the well-dried skulls of large tigers were recorded and comparisons instituted. The record skull in the Asiatic Museum is that of the first tiger given in the above table. So much has been written about the length of tigers that there is nothing fresh to bring forward, but it may be pointed out that nearly all experienced writers on Indian sport maintain the existence of 11-foot tigers. Among these may be mentioned Major Shakespear, Sir Joseph Fayrer,

Mr F. B. Simpson, and Mr E. B. Baker. It was Jerdon's work on the Mammals of India that created a creed about the 10-foot tiger; but Mr Sterndale says, 'Dr Jerdon, whom I knew intimately, was not, I may safely assert, a great tiger-shikari, and he based his opinion on evidence and with great caution,' and in this the writer can bear Mr Sterndale out. General Alexander A. A. Kinloch and the late Mr Sanderson follow Jerdon, but the experience of tiger-shooting by these two well-known sportsmen is comparatively small."



PART II.

SPORT AT HOME

SHOOTING.

CHAPTER I.

A NOVEMBER DAY IN BUCHAN.

IN these days, when "the schoolmaster is abroad" and every one educated *au bout des ongles*, it may seem presumption on my part to offer a few remarks as to the locality of Buchan.¹ I venture to do so, however, seeing it is within the bounds of possibility that some of my readers may be as ignorant regarding its situation and capabilities for sport as I personally was before I went to reside there. Buchan, which in Celtic times was a thanedom, is now one of the five districts of Aberdeenshire, and comprises that part of the county lying between the rivers Ythan and

¹ From *Bow-chuan*, Gaelic for "Land in the bend of the ocean."

Deveron. Though to the lovers of scenery it possesses but few charms compared with the rugged glens, mountains, and rolling stretches of heather that adorn the Highlands, yet to the antiquary and sportsman it is full of interest.

Somehow the uninteresting nature of the land seems reflected in its inhabitants; for though they are, as a rule, a thoroughly honest and kind-hearted set of people, of simple and primitive manners, among whom a certain element of superstition still lingers, they manage to hide a large share of their good qualities under a more than usually thick mantle of reserve and *brusquerie*. The almost universal tameness of its scenery and the distinctive traits of the inhabitants have not tended to give the district a good name, and there are many who affect to look down on poor Buchan and all connected with it. I am not one of these, however; for during my residence there I met with the very greatest kindness and hospitality from high and low, rich and poor; whilst as to sport, I enjoyed the very best and most varied with rod and gun that any reasonable man could expect. The principal rivers—the Deveron, the Ythan, and the Ugies (North and South)—offered fair sport with salmon and grilse in the autumn; whilst for sea-trout, finnock (that mysterious fish whose identity I

have never yet heard satisfactorily settled), and yellow trout, they rank very high. The character of the country is generally undulating. The great open fields, enclosed with turf banks and stone walls, or "dykes," as they are called, surmounted by that most detestable invention, barbed wire, afford splendid covert for partridges. The hill of Mormond, some 800 feet above the level of the sea, and the only big hill in Buchan, together with small stretches of heather and peat-bog, generally termed "mosses," shelter a fair number of grouse, and are generally a safe find for duck, teal, and snipe. Bordering the sea in places, huge piles of driven sand, devoid of all vegetation but the coarse bent-grass, though they seem by their barrenness a veritable Sahara, yet prove an unassailable refuge for that much-abused but most useful animal—from a sporting as well as a food-supply point of view—the rabbit; whilst the caves that abound in the other and more rocky parts of the coast form admirable breeding-places for the blue rock-pigeon, besides numerous varieties of gulls, &c. Hares, thanks to the odious Ground Game Act, are comparatively scarce, except in a few places where they are strictly preserved. Pheasants do well where there is sufficient covert for them; but except in isolated places, like the policies and coverts

of private residences, there is hardly a tree to be seen. In some of the big woods, of which there are comparatively few, there are numerous roe-deer, and a good sprinkling of woodcock are at times to be found. Golden plover and lapwing are very numerous, and this about completes the list of game to be found.

Having thus so far described the general nature of the land, I will proceed to give a more detailed account of a day's sport I enjoyed on some 1200 acres of ground which I rented. Before doing so, I must warn my readers that they will find no description of hecatombs of game slain; for though I may lay myself open to the charge of being a slow and pottering sportsman in these fast-going days of "record-beating," yet I hold that he enjoys his sport best who enjoys it in his own way. For my part, I think that the greatest enjoyment to be derived from shooting is working for your game yourself, finding it aided by dogs, and killing it in a sportsmanlike manner; and I must confess that personally I enjoyed this particular day's sport as much as, if not more than, any I have ever had in the British Isles, comparatively small though my bag was.

The day in question, in the second week of November, opened dark and lowering. Heavy banks of grey clouds rolling up from the south-

west gave promise of rain, and made it appear anything but a promising day for sport. However, after breakfast and the matutinal visit to the stable and the kennel, I strolled up to the keeper's cottage to consult that worthy as to whether it would be advisable to go out. A twinge or two of rheumatism made me anything but keen to face the probable ducking I should get. Still, I did not want to stay at home—in fact, I only wanted a little encouragement. That encouragement I got, for, in reply to my inquiry, “Well, Cameron, what do you think of the day? Do you think we should try the Moss?” I received the answer, given with all the carefulness of the canny Scot, “Weel, the day is no’ that bad, sir. I do not think we shall have much rain, though I couldna say for certain. But I think you should try the Moss. Eh, *what* a ducks, and *what* a partridge I heer’d there last night!” This settled the question as far as I was concerned.

“The Moss” was a piece of rough ground some 150 acres in extent, distant about two miles. It was composed of heather, rushes, peat-bog, and rough grass, with two small ponds in its centre, and numerous wet boggy ditches, the chosen haunt of duck, teal, and snipe, intersecting it. Arable fields surrounded it on three sides, whilst

along the fourth ran a narrow strip of stunted Scotch fir-trees, thick heather, and gorse—a very woodcocky-looking place, in fact. There were always duck and snipe on the Moss except in a hard frost, when they all vanished as if by magic; whilst in the thick heather, rank grass, and rushes all the partridges in the neighbourhood seemed to “jug,” and if you could only find them there in the daytime, they lay like stones, and got up singly in the most accommodating manner. I had had many a day’s fun at the Moss, and never anything but good sport. I had a sneaking wish to give it a rest, for I had been there only a few days previously; but Cameron’s dictum settled the question. So, merely telling him I must go home and write some letters, and would call at his cottage at 11.30, I strolled home. Correspondence being finished, I put fifty cartridges in my bag, including a few No. 8 for snipe, let my old retriever Sam out, and we sallied forth.

The day seemed gradually to alter for the better, and by the time I and Cameron reached the ground the sun shone out fairly, and everything looked *couleur de rose*. After a short consultation, we determined to try the ponds first for duck, as I well knew that at the first shot those wide-awake denizens of the marsh

would be up and away, winging their flight to more secluded spots. Now, my old Sam, though to me worth his weight in gold, and dear as the apple of my eye, could not, with all his good qualities, lay claim to being a "no-slip retriever." His keenness and love of sport occasionally overcame his more worldly wisdom and prudence, and he, like a canny Scot that he was, had an inclination to follow the old national adage and "mak sikker"—i.e., collar his game before it had a chance of running far. This fault, however, years of faithful companionship and honest work induced me to overlook, and in critical moments I was not above restraining the old dog's inherent—and shall we say natural?—ardour by means of a slip. Running in at this particular spot, or going in quest of a moor-hen (which beastly bird seems to have an irresistible fascination for him), would be fatal to all my chances of success, and so the cord is slipped through the ring in his collar, and he is made fast to "master" *pro tem*. With a No.-5-shot cartridge in the right barrel, No. 4 in the left, and leaving Cameron crouching at the edge of the Moss with his spaniel Bob, Sam and I steal forward. Silently I creep on, with bent back, like Agag stepping delicately on the spongy sphagnum moss, and cautiously striding

across any little pools of water, fearful lest the least splash should betray our presence to the wary wild-fowl. A little ridge of heather and peat favour our quiet advance, and we reach the edge of the rush-fringed pool. A glance shows there are no duck there; but at the far end a miniature shallow creek runs up, and loses itself amid aquatic plants and heather. It is, I know, a favourite feeding-ground, so thither we sneak on. In the intervening space, however, the water lies some three inches deep on the ground. We have to traverse some seventy yards, but ere half the distance is accomplished Sam incautiously makes a splash, owing to his stepping into an unusually deep puddle. That is enough. Up rise two teal a good forty yards off, and as I fire at the nearest bird, which I have the satisfaction of bowling over, a mallard gets up with a startled "quack," only the next moment to fall with a delightful thud on the heather beyond, in response to my left barrel. We crouch down behind some tall rushes and remain motionless, and in a few moments the remaining teal comes circling back high overhead in search of its mate, the whistle of its wings sounding clear, and the gleam of its under wing-feathers showing distinct in the November sun. Once, twice, it comes

over me, but Sam and I remain immovable. The third time it almost makes up its mind to pitch; but as it darts swiftly downwards it catches sight of us, and, recovering itself, shoots up with a quick, frightened side-movement. Too late. You are well within shot, my little green-and-russet-headed beauty, and I should indeed be a duffer to miss such a shot at thirty yards; so you, too, get your *quietus*.

A couple of teal and a duck make not a bad beginning, so I call Cameron up, and he praises the stalk with a "Well done!" as I hand him the spoil to be deposited in the game-bag. We then light a pipe, and determine to try for some snipe. On my way to stalk the duck I had risen several of the "wily long-bills," and I fear, in my heart of hearts, cursed their startled cry of alarm. Three of these Cameron had marked down, after they had indulged in their aerial gyrations for some five minutes. Two went down by a little ditch at the far end of the Moss, whilst the third lighted close beside the other pool, round which some rushes had been cut. This was a favourite place for snipe, as I well knew; and thinking he would probably have some companions, I went after the farthest lot first. Cameron had marked them to a yard, and when within some thirty yards, up they got, twisting away with rapid

flight. The first, an easy shot, I missed, *proh pudor!* but the left barrel cut him down handsomely nearly fifty yards off. We then went after the other, getting *en route* a jack-snipe that Sam hunted up out of some thick rushes with praiseworthy zeal. Arrived at the second pool, my surmise as to the spot in its vicinity containing more than one snipe was verified. "Scaape, scaape, scaape!" resounded all round me, and I had five shots as quick as I could load and fire, with the result that three more snipe were added to the bag.

Time for lunch now; so we make our way to the strip of wood before referred to, where, sheltered from the wind, we can enjoy our lunch, basking in the sun. How jolly these frugal shooting-lunches are! A good packet of sandwiches (give me for choice those made of potted rabbit, with a squeeze of lemon and a dash of yellow Nepaul pepper over them), a hunk of cake, and a sup of whisky-and-water out of the flask—what more does one want? Does ever epicurean feast, or choicest efforts of the most talented *chef*, taste so delicious, when partaken of amid all the luxury of a big and "swell" house, as this modest meal discussed under the blue vault of heaven, and amidst the fine bracing northern air? I think not. But then I am an enthusiast, and

love nature and outdoor life, and so I must be forgiven, an it please you.

En route, as we cross a strip of heather and rough grass, Sam cocks his ears, and his tail waves with excitement. Something is up, I see by the way the old dog keeps looking back at me, so I walk up to him. He is puzzled for a moment near a thick patch of rushes, then turns off at a tangent towards some stunted gorse. As he reaches this a partridge rises with a loud "whir," giving me such an easy shot that I cannot well miss. Sam having no slip on, takes advantage of the fact to promptly retrieve it; and as he brings it back, his honest old face beaming with pride and gratification, I have not the heart to punish him more than by stern words of reproof. It would be indeed a heart of adamant that could thrash that black curly body which crouches low with such humble devotion, and such honesty beaming forth from those clear dark eyes. So Sam is let off this time, and stroking down the plumage of the partridge—for we like our game to look clean as well as being killed clean—we proceed to lunch. First, though, we lay out the bag to cool; and not a bad show does it make—a duck, two teal, a partridge, and five snipe; and as we munch our sandwiches we shoot them all over again, and admire their beautiful blended

plumage, and feel more keen than ever. Just one pipe, and then “farrard.”

I suggest trying some fields round the Moss, and endeavouring to drive birds into its thick covert; but Cameron remarks, “I think we had better try down this little strip first, sir. It’s a verra likely place for a woodcock. If you will go to yon far end, I will hunt it down with Bob till ye.” I agree, and proceed to take up my position where a field-road bisects the belt of wood. Soon I hear Bob giving tongue, and an incautious bunny pops out over the bank and scuttles across the open. He is added to the bag easily enough. Then an old hare canters past, but I let her go, as I want to encourage hares here. She catches sight of me, and, turning off with ears laid back, speeds away over the Moss, and I can trace her course for a long way by the showers of spray she sends up as she splashes over the wet ground. This part of the strip holds nothing more beyond a wood-pigeon or two, who carefully keep out of shot; so I move on to the far end. Cameron is half-way through when I hear a shout of “Mark cock! cock forward!” Yes, there he is, flapping along the outside of the covert, coming straight to me: when within some forty yards, however, he seems to alter his mind as to the direction he shall pursue, and turns sharp to the left, twisting through

the branches of some fir-trees that out-top their fellows. It is a long shot, but I must risk it, and just as he crosses a space a little wider than the rest, I take a hurried snap-shot. Whether he has gone on or not I cannot tell, as the trees hide the view. "Did ye get him, sir?" asks Cameron as he comes up. "I cannot say," is my reply; "but if he is down, I know where he ought to be." Accordingly Sam and Bob search every inch of ground "where he ought to be," but, alas! with no success. A piece of a wing-feather sticking on the branch of a tree is all the trace we can find of our game; so, after spending some twenty minutes in a fruitless search, we leave the strip and get out into the road that divides it from the Moss. We have gone about one hundred yards along this, when Sam seems strangely attracted by something. His head goes up, and he moves it from side to side, as if trying to catch some faint and fleeting odour blowing from the Moss. I wave him on, and he goes straight up to a clump of heather some fifty yards distant, pauses a moment, then dives in and seizes something, which he brings back to me with a triumphant air. It is my winged woodcock, who, hidden from my sight, must have skimmed on after being struck.

We now work some swede-fields, one of which

is on my "march." Here I get two brace of partridges, and miss several more. A hare, too, who evinces a desire to stray from home, is added to the bag. We have put three coveys of birds into the Moss, so follow them thither, and get three brace more, as well as another snipe. It is now time to turn homewards, and thither we shape our course. Skirting the edge of the Moss amongst the heather, Sam suddenly gets wind of something, which turns out to be a hen pheasant. As pheasants have no business in this outlying and isolated beat, I knock her over, and at the report her mate, a fine old cock, flusters up out of the tall heather in a great state of commotion, and is accounted for with the left barrel. Going along the road, we see a flock of golden plover circling round, and so we crouch down under the dyke-side and watch. After wheeling and skimming about for some time, they settle in a ploughed field, right in the middle, and well out of shot. The field is a long one, and about 130 yards across; so I crawl down behind the bank that bounds one side, whilst Cameron walks down, showing himself, a little distance beyond the other. This manœuvre is to a certain extent successful, for the birds run towards me; but nearer than some sixty yards they will not come, so I determine to risk a shot, long one though it is, and as golden plover have

been very uncommon this season, and it is permissible to get them anyhow, I take a pot-shot on the ground, trying to get two in line before firing. In this endeavour, however, I am foiled ; so aiming at the nearest bird, I fire, and empty my left barrel at the flock as they rise. One lies dead, whilst another legs it down the field ; but Sam soon captures the truant. A third we see going away hard hit ; but he disappears over a bit of rising ground, and we fail to account for him. And now we continue our homeward journey till we reach a long strip of beech-wood that bounds my shooting. This literally swarms with wood-pigeons, and as they are now coming in to roost, I suggest to Cameron that I shall go on and post myself at one end, whilst he walks up the wood and puts them over to me. I am keen on slaying some of these turnip-marauders, for I have spent many an hour trying to circumvent them, with but scant success. As sure as I go and stop in one bit of covert where they are in the habit of roosting, so surely do they select some other spot for their resting-place ; and as to trying for a shot by walking quietly under the trees, that is out of the question, for the wretches seem to know intuitively that their safest course is to leave the tree the opposite side to the gun, which course is, as you all know,

productive of much annoyance and discomfiture to the gunner. Altogether, I am very angry with them, and this seems a good opportunity of paying off old scores. Making a detour, I get down to the end of the Old Wood, as it is called. This is a broad strip of giant beeches, with an undergrowth of gorse and heather, and joins on to another younger and thicker bit of covert, from which it is divided by a high bank, with the inevitable strand of barbed wire running along the top, some foot and a half above the dyke. A barbed-wire fence also extends along the outside of the Old Wood, dividing it from a stubble-field. A small burn trickles down the bottom of the wood on the other side. Putting the slip on Sam, I make him lie down at my feet, and we conceal ourselves as best we can behind the gnarled and knotted trunk of a beech-tree, where there is a good open space in front of me. What a peaceful evening it was! A gentle breeze just stirred the tops of the trees, now almost bare of leaf. The sun was sinking to rest in a bed of purple and gold behind yon hill to the westward, and glancing here and there, through the lattice-work of branches, on the green and brown carpet of moss and fallen leaves. The burn, rippling on down below, seemed to sing a soothing song, and its music was added to by

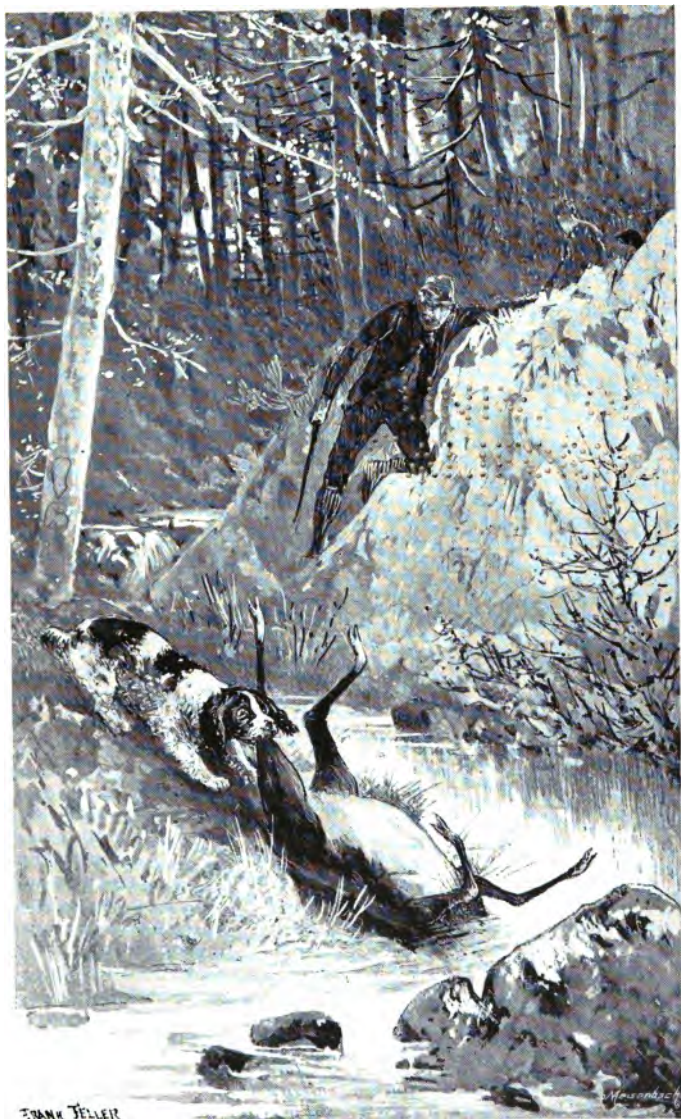
the cheerful twitter of a robin and the cry of blackbirds as they bustled about before going to roost. A hare stole quietly past, unnoticed except by Sam, who pricked his ears and looked up to me as if to ask why I did not shoot it. On the stubble the partridges were calling, and away behind me the "cock-cock!" of a pheasant sounded clear and sharp; while the constant cooing in my direct front betokened that there any number of pigeons were waiting to be shot. I could not help feeling that, even if I did not get a shot, my time of waiting would not have been thrown away; for such moments spent amid the solitude of nature must appeal to all one's better feelings, and bring home with irresistible force the beauty and splendour, as well as the wonders, of the universe.

Thus musing, I happened to turn my eyes to the left, and there, as if carved out of stone, and some fifty yards from me, stood a roedeer. I had shot one not far from this spot about ten days previously, but did not know there was another about. What a graceful airy form it was! I felt half inclined to spare it; but calling to mind numerous young trees lately planted by my landlord and about whose growth he was particularly anxious, and having visions of *côtelettes de chevreuil* floating in my mind, all scruples

vanished, and I determined to add venison to my already varied bag. Roedeer, though such bonny beasts, are very destructive to young trees, nibbling off the top growths in wanton mischief; and though some people affect to despise their flesh as an article of food, I must confess I am not among the number, for, properly cooked, it is to my mind a feast fit for Lucullus. There she stood, gazing straight at me. Sam did not see or notice her, and I was well hidden; so I remained motionless, not daring to wink an eyelid even, for the space of two or three minutes. This prolonged scrutiny probably settled in the deer's mind that my head was only some branch or excrescence of the tree behind which I stood, and as she had not got my wind, she began grazing and fed on to within some thirty-five yards of me. Then something seemed to alarm her, for she stopped feeding, gave an impatient stamp with a fore-foot, and looked back over her shoulder in the direction where, in the distance between the trees, I saw Cameron advancing. Now or never, I thought; so aiming well behind the shoulder I fired. With a tremendous bound she dashed forward, then turning rapidly to the left, sped away towards Cameron. "Confound it, I have missed!" I ejaculated inwardly. Then came a shout from Cameron of "Roe, roe,

forward!" and I saw the deer coming back to me and skirting the wire fence that bounded the wood, followed by Bob, bowling along in full cry some seventy yards behind. I saw she must pass me out of shot from where I was stationed, so ran as hard as I could to cut her off, Sam straining at the slip and nearly upsetting me; and as she bounded through a patch of gorse some thirty yards distant, I fired both barrels (and nearly fell over Sam in his frantic excitement), but apparently without effect, and before I could re-load, the deer with a most surprising bound cleared bank and barbed wire in her stride, and disappeared amid the thick larches of the adjoining covert. To say I was annoyed and disgusted at this second failure would but inadequately express my feelings; I was downright savage. I felt sure I had not missed; but wounding an animal or bird and failing to bag, is to my mind but poor consolation, and to miss clean is far preferable. I slipped Sam on the bare chance of the poor brute having only run a little way and then died, and he and Bob disappeared from my sight. Then Cameron came up, and to him I related what a mess I had made of the whole thing. His reply, though containing an element of consolation in it, did not reassure me, however. "Ye struck her hard your first shot, sir,

and she canna go far." "Well," I thought, "if she goes on for ten minutes at the rate I last saw her going, she'll soon be off my ground, and there is no covert worth speaking of to hold her for miles. There," I added to Cameron, as Sam came back to me with his red tongue lolling out of his mouth, very pumped, and looking rather ashamed of himself, though somewhat reproachfully at me, —as much as to say, "Well, I never thought you would fire at a sheep and then want me to retrieve it" (he had never seen a roedeer before)—"I told you so; we'll never see the beast again, and goodness knows where your dog has gone!" "She's no' gone far, sir; and Bob will have got hold of her, I'm thinking. We'll just wa'k on and see," was the somewhat stoical reply. Well, we did "wa'k on," and with the result that, some 300 yards on in the covert, we saw a white patch down by the burn. "He's got her!" exclaimed Cameron excitedly, as he scrambled down the bank. Yes, it was quite true. There was the deer lying on its back with its head in the little burn, whilst Bob was making frantic efforts to pull her out; and the white patch we had seen was the fur on the deer's stomach. Then all feeling of annoyance and disappointment vanished, and gave way to those of pleasure and inward congratulation. I forgave Sam nearly pulling me



"He's got her!"

THE
MUSEUM
OF
NATURAL
HISTORY
OF
THE
CITY OF
NEW YORK
AND
THE
ADJACENT
COUNTY OF
WESTCHESTER

over, and telling me a lie, as I thought he had. The fact was, the old dog had followed the deer, but finding he could not carry it, had come back to me.

Twilight was now deepening into night; so, after bleeding the deer and lighting a pipe, Cameron hoisted her on to his shoulders, whilst I collared the game-bag, and we trudged home discussing the day's sport; and when the bag was laid out in the game-larder it made a goodly show, comprising, as it did, one roedeer, one hare, one rabbit, one mallard, two teal, six snipe, eleven partridges, two pheasants, one woodcock, and two golden plover — total, twenty - eight head. Not a bad day's sport, I think; and though I didn't get any of the pigeons, it was quite good enough, in my opinion, for one gun, and a credit to Buchan.



Professor Cameron delivering a lecture.

CHAPTER II.

A ROEDEER-DRIVE.

NOT a very high form of sport, perhaps, is roedeer-driving, but instructive and amusing withal (even though it bring the blush of shame to our cheeks). Nor is it without its concomitant amount of danger. The sceptic will prick up his ears at the word danger, and ask where it comes in—for anything like peril to life and limb in the pursuit of such a timid and harmless little animal as a roedeer seems at first sight an absurdity; and yet there is danger, at least when you form a unit of the heterogeneous concourse of guns that make up a roedeer-driving party in the big woods of Aberdeenshire, Perthshire, or other counties of Scotland. Let me explain.

On these occasions a number of guns to guard all the passes and prevent roe breaking back is a necessity, and, moreover, the laird or lessee of the shooting takes the opportunity afforded by his

annual *chasse à chevreuil*, if I may use a Gallicism, to invite all the farmers in the neighbourhood who have any leanings towards sport to participate in the fun. Many of course do not come; but, on the other hand, many do, and bring with them guns of not only fearful and antiquated make, but uncertain power. Truly, some are of an awful description. Some canny Scot will probably be armed with a regular blunderbuss that one of his "forebears" used in the "'45"; another's weapon will have barrel and stock bound together with a lashing of very rotten-looking string; whilst the younger members of the community, anxious to be in the fashion, blossom out into Brummagem breech-loaders (as a rule covered with rust), whose very look fills you with suspicion and awe. But, independently of the danger from such weapons, there is a greater one—viz., the excitement and carelessness of their owners, who are all as keen as mustard to "loose off" at something. No matter what gets up, or at what range, or in what direction, it is saluted with a volley. By sheer good luck the quarry may escape, or be blown to pieces; but as often as not a few stray pellets will find their billet, if not in the person of one of the forward guns, at all events in the legs of a fellow-beater. I should have prefaced these remarks by saying that, with a few exceptions,

have been “dusting” on the plantation-dyke. Then we move on for the more serious business of the day, and this involves beating a hill of some 800 acres, whose lower part is covered with a thick growth of fir-trees, ranging from twenty feet to twenty-five feet in height, whilst in its upper part the trees are fewer and smaller, till they dwindle away on the bare sky-line, where nothing but heather will grow. Three beats through this produce but little—a rabbit or two, a brace of cock pheasants, and a hen ditto, blown to pieces by an eager farmer before she was well on the wing, being the sum total; and then, whilst the beaters straggle out and collect on a rough moorland-road, we “guns” walk on a good mile to take up our position for one of *the* drives of the day. It is a longish step and rough walking, but at last we are all posted in a newly cut drive behind barricades of freshly lopped fir-boughs. The trees here are low, not more than ten feet high, the covert thick, and one of the “flankers”—viz., a keeper from an adjoining estate—occupies the most unlikely post behind a small fir-tree in the open. I mention this with a purpose, for the result bore out what was uppermost in my mind. This was what happened. A long wait, a brace of cock pheasants—one of which was well killed by the general, and

the other missed by myself—and a shot by the “flanker,” was all that the beat produced. The shot from the keeper was at a roe, which he vowed he knocked over, but which could never be found. When the beaters came up the report was, “Three roe put up, but all broke back.” Then another and another beat, all with a like result. Roe seen and fired at by some of the beaters, but all broke back. Reader, can you guess the cause? If not, I could; and it was this. The rides had only been cut a week before, and the roe, being wary and suspicious animals, refused to cross them. Well, this did not strike the authorities, and it was no business of mine to enlighten them, for I had come out to learn, not to teach.

When one o’clock came it was lunch-time, and this was by no means unwelcome; for the keen air had generated an appetite that made venison-pasties, bread and cheese, to say nothing of sundry jam-puffs and cake, with just one glass of Glenlivet or brown sherry, a feast fit for Lucullus. The beaters, however, preferred less dainty fare, and it took them some time to put away huge rabbit-pies, a baronial mass of beef, and I am afraid to say how much whisky. It was getting on for 3 P.M. before we once more took the field.

This beat, we were informed, was a certainty.

Ah me! those "certainties," how often they prove fallacies! and this was no exception to the rule. But I must not anticipate. The wind was right, and there were no fresh-cut rides to scare our quarry. The guns were cunningly posted, I being placed in a spot where "last year So-and-so got two bucks." Nay, the very pass, not five-and-twenty yards distant, was pointed out to me. But, alas! the result was just the same; four roe, one bearing a grand head, broke back. And hitherto we had not caught sight of horn or hoof! But there was more work before us, and another "certain" beat to be done. This, indeed, looked likely. The ground sloped upwards—a mass of tangled heather and small stunted fir-trees. The guns were well posted, where they could see and yet be unseen, and if Diana was to favour us, now was surely her time. The beaters had a long way to go round, and so it was pleasant to recline on the soft cushion of lichen and heather, and, whilst smoking the soothing pipe, let the eye wander over the fair landscape and vast solitudes stretching away as far as vision went. Light and shade mingled fitfully on strath and brae, now glancing on some stackyard or crofter's white cottage, now deepening on some patch of dark fir-wood; whilst away on the horizon a stretch of rugged hills, with Ben-

achie's peak towering above them, cut the skyline. Bar the sough of the wind and the faint voice of a distant beater, not a sound broke the stillness; and a modest little wren, hopping and twittering in a diminutive fir-tree close by, was the only sign of life. Yes, even if one did not get sport, on such a day as this it was at least pleasant to be out of doors and drink in "God's glorious oxygen."

But, hark! that shrill whistle is the signal for the line of skirmishers to advance, and we must be on the *qui vive*; so, knocking the ashes out of my pipe, I take post behind a scrubby tree, and become all attention. What is that bird winging its way towards us with heavy flight? A black-cock surely. Yes. See, on he comes, high up, a sporting shot, and going at a greater pace than he looks. But he is not out of shot, and holding well forward as he crosses, a charge of No. 4 brings him crashing down into the heather some forty yards away. And now I can see the beaters beginning to show in the distance, where the growth of young fir-trees becomes thinner, and puffs of smoke show that the guns with them, at any rate, are having some fun. Then I catch sight of a brown form glancing over an open spot and coming straight towards me. A roe for certain, but whether buck or doe distance pre-

vents my telling. Lost sight of for a moment, it reappears, then stops and looks back, listening to the shouts of the beaters. Ah ! yes ; it is a buck. I can see his horns now as he bobs on over the thick heather in a zigzag course. Within a couple of hundred yards of my post, however, something arouses his suspicions. Maybe I was not really so well concealed as I thought ; maybe the sun glinted on my gun-barrel ; for, swinging sharp to his left, he passed within forty-five yards of one of the other guns. Two barrels saluted him *en passant*, but they apparently had no effect, as I could see the brown form bobbing away for some distance, till, crossing the brow of a small hillock, he was lost to sight. The beaters now began to draw up, and though they put up a few pheasants, none came my way ; and the only shot I got was at an old hare, who came cantering up in the most confiding way. When the beat was nearly over, a tremendous hubbub and cries of “Roe ! roe !” followed by several dropping shots in a thick patch of covert, denoted something was up ; and on emerging into the road the result was apparent—a nice young buck, shot by a farmer, and the latter explaining how “the beastie wad ha’ knock-ed me o’er, mon, had I no’ fired.” (He had nearly bagged a beater at the same time, and was apologising.)

The game gralloched, we moved on to the most likely-looking beat of the day. The lower part consisted of young fir-trees, tall heather, and thick gorse. On the higher side the trees were sparse and of stunted growth, getting smaller and smaller, till some 200 yards from the top of the hill they gave place to heather entirely. The guns were posted in a gully that bounded the covert, and the beat began. Not a single shot did any one of us get, except that one of the party had a very long shot at an old cock grouse that soared overhead as if in insolent defiance. Talk of insolence, indeed! Had you carried your eye up to the summit of the hill, you would have seen, sharply defined against the sky-line, two roedeer gazing calmly down on us as we all "forgathered." For full five minutes did they stand staring, then trotted a few yards, and at last, turning the white patches on their quarters towards us, disappeared. The shades of evening were now gathering, and it was time to turn homewards; so it was resolved to take a wide beat back the whole length of one-half of the ground we had tried in the morning, and whilst three of the party went forward to the end, the beaters were to sweep round a shoulder of the hill, and endeavour to force any roe that might be there towards the fourth gun and myself, who

were posted half-way. They did indeed move some, but it was the old story of breaking back. It was during this beat I have to confess missing a woodcock shamefully. Truth to tell, I had become careless, and tired of standing and doing nothing; so as Master Longbill flitted past me in the deepening twilight, I was taken unawares and let him get almost too far; an intervening tree did the rest. Then on with the beaters, and at the very end of the beat a shot away in a corner of a field finished the day. This was from our host, who had taken the most unlikely post, and was rewarded, for one of the crafty little deer had slipped out of a corner of the covert, had crossed a field, and was re-entering a thick patch of fir-trees when it succumbed to a charge of No. 4 shot.

And now, as all gather round, let us see how the bag totals up: two roedeer, three black-game, two grouse, nine pheasants, one woodcock, two wood-pigeons, eight hares, and sixteen rabbits = forty-three head—not a very grand total, perhaps, but sufficiently varied, nevertheless: no accidents, and a crisp, bright, autumnal day in the open air, such as one only gets in dear bonny Scotland—all mercies to be thankful for. Seventeen roedeer were reported as having been seen, and though probably many of these

came to view more than once, I fancy the covert must have held very nearly a dozen. After all, though, I was not sorry they escaped, dearly as my soul loveth savoury meat in the shape of *côtelettes de chevreuil*. At any rate, I do not regret not having been responsible for the death of any.



How can we shoot her?

CHAPTER III.

THE FEAST OF ST PARTRIDGE—DOGS OR DRIVING?

LET others boast of the glories of grouse, and indulge in rapturous talk about the purple heather, the bracing air, and all the delights of Highland shooting; but give us the bonny little brown bird. For though the few favoured individuals who are enabled to participate in the aristocratic sport of grouse-shooting may be described as *terque, quaterque, beati*, yet the pursuit of the more humble partridge appeals more directly to the mass of English sportsmen, and from the very fact of being more accessible to the majority, independently of being less expensive, is more popular. Grouse-shooting not only involves travelling a long distance, but is more or less expensive. Fairly good partridge-shooting, on the other hand, can be rented for a comparatively moderate sum, and may be obtained within an hour or two of town. In these

cosmopolitan days, no slight argument in its favour is that it is not confined to the moneyed classes exclusively, as many a farmer enjoys his bit of partridge-shooting over a brace of good dogs, and modest bag of eight to ten brace of birds, with a few rabbits and an odd hare or two, as much as the owner of a Norfolk manor, whose party of six to eight guns walk the fields in line, and account for hecatombs of slain.

Following the march of events, the conditions under which the sport is nowadays pursued has altered considerably within the last twenty-five to thirty years. Agricultural science and high farming have both metamorphosed the land in many districts. The high sickle-reaped stubbles have given way to closely shorn machine-cut fields, and rough tussocky pastures, under the hand of the drainer, have in many places vanished. Turnips, it is true, remain, and birds having, like their pursuers, been educated, and their wits sharpened, seldom lie well nowadays in any other cover (except perhaps clover), the entrance of the sportsmen at one corner of a field being generally the signal for the covey to leave it at the other, after they have been shot at once or twice. Still, closely shorn as are the stubbles of to-day, they yet offer attraction to the "little brown birds," in the shape of spilt

corn, or some spot where they can “dust” under a sunny bank, and from these feeding-grounds it is not unusual to send men to drive them into the turnips an hour or two before the sportsmen set out.

In the days of our fathers operations were conducted very differently from what they are now. Men then did not travel so far afield for their amusement with dog and gun. Sporting energies that had been pent up ever since the first day of February were bubbling over with excitement and anticipation, and “The First” was looked forward to with a relish and delight that in these days of bustle and high pressure are practically unknown. We have become too *blasé*, and to many satiated with grouse-slaughter, the charms of the 1st September are viewed with indifference. Formerly the sportsman was up at “strike of day,” and by the time that the modern “masher” is only thinking of turning out of bed, had tramped many a mile and had bagged his eight to ten brace of partridges. Indefatigably, too, did they work till noontide, when heat and exhaustion called for a halt under some spreading oak, or straggling hedge where the nuts were browning on the hazel-bushes, and the dog-rose seed-pods assuming their autumnal tints of orange and scarlet. Then the game-bag con-

tained the modest lunch, consisting of sandwiches, with a bit of bread and cheese and a few pears or harvest apples; while a small keg of beer and a pocket-flask of sherry or whisky provided drink for master and man. With such simple fare the sportsman of yore was contented, nay, even enjoyed himself, and after an hour's rest would set forth with renewed vigour, till the lengthening shadows, and the calling of the scattered coveys as they reassembled on their feeding-grounds, warned him it was time to turn homewards; and then, as the mists of evening crept up and the dew began to fall, he would reach home, tired and footsore maybe, but feeling brimful of health and spirits, able to do ample justice to his dinner and a glass or two of old port, conscious that he had worked for and shot his game like a true sportsman.

How different the conditions of to-day! An hour of leisurely dressing, and then the sportsman saunters down to a late breakfast. A drive to the place of meeting, and Golden Youth takes his "hammerless ejector" gun, assumes his place in the line, composed of eight or ten guns, with half-a-dozen keepers with their led retrievers, and double the number of beaters, and plods on, taking no actual part in the sport beyond turning himself into a mere shooting-machine. If a

winged bird is down, he is left to be found (perhaps?) some hours after by a keeper, whose duty it is to go round and pick up the wounded—the line must not be delayed, time is too precious; and so the game goes on till mid-day, when a snowy cloth, silver, champagne, and a hot lunch, with numerous delicacies, are found necessary to recruit exhausted energies. Then, after lunch and the inevitable cigarette, the game begins *da capo*, till the waggonette meets the party, and by seven o'clock our sportsman has donned a gorgeous silk-faced smoking-coat, is dallying with Phyllis in the drawing-room, and endeavouring by the means of "five-o'clock tea" and appetite-provocative dainties to nerve himself for dinner a couple of hours later. Then the billiard or smoking room, and "fizzy drinks," and at one o'clock the party breaks up.

No untrue picture this, believe me, of the sporting youth of the day and his artificial life. Not that I would brand *all* as such—for there are many good men and true, as good and keen sportsmen as ever their forefathers were; but it is the tendency of an age of luxury, a period when every one endeavours to outvie the other, and cram into a month an amount of shooting that would have lasted his "forebears" for a whole season.

Let your spirit stray with me in the realms of fancy, and though we cannot trudge through the dew-drenched turnips, and see Don and Bess at work *in propria persona*, we can at least do so in imagination.

It is a bright glorious morning, with just that touch of keenness in the air that makes autumn invigorating, as we light our pipes at the front door, after an eight-o'clock breakfast. John, the keeper, is waiting outside with his *aide-de-chasse* "Willum," the watcher and rabbit-catcher, attended by a couple of minor satellites, who are to mark and carry the game; and these, touching their caps respectfully, greet us with "Marnin', gentlemen." A few minutes' conversation with John as to our beat, and after learning that there are a couple of good coveys in Farmer Dymond's roots, another in the big stubble facing Littleford, three more on the rough ground on the hill, and several others, we slightly alter the worthy John's plan of operations, and shouldering our guns, toddle off. Passing through the lodge-gate, we follow the highroad for a few hundred yards, and then turn up a narrow lane, on whose banks ferns, red campion, brambles, nettles, and other plants of the field, all struggle for supremacy, till the little-used cart-track ends in a stile. Here we meet John's son, a fresh, ruddy-looking

youth of some sixteen summers, who is holding a leash of pointers, shivering and quivering with excitement as only pointers can, and hardly do they seem to heed young John's warning of "Down, Don ; down, Shot ; what be doin', Bess ?" as the latter tugs and strains at her chain. A pat all round, and then Don and Bess are uncoupled in a large grass-field which separates us from Farmer Dymond's roots. Round they tear in the full exuberance of liberty, and we let them have their fling as we stroll on. At last the mangolds are reached—a fine crop indeed, the giant yellow globes growing half out of the soil, while their broad, cool-looking, glossy foliage bears ample evidence that Farmer Dymond has been no niggard with his manure. Now for our fun ; and as we open our guns and drop in the cartridges, our inmost souls are aglow with excitement and expectancy. "Hold up !" Away go the pointers, quartering their ground with precision, crossing and recrossing each other as they glide up and down the drills, moving rapidly, yet stealthily, as well-broken dogs should ; we would not tolerate a blustering brute that floundered through crosswise, kicking up no end of a row. Ha ! "To ho ! steady, good dogs." See ! they are on the point of cross-

ing each other when Bess stops dead short in her stride, and half swings round, her nose almost bent round to her quarters, her body curved and her stifle-joint nearly touching the ground, so suddenly has she acknowledged the delicious *bouquet de perdrix*. Her stern is extended straight and stiff as a ramrod, her eyes are fixed in a glassy stare, and were it not for the almost imperceptible quiver in her tail and the corners of her mouth, and the saliva that trickles from the latter, you might fancy she was carved out of stone. Don "backs" to perfection, with one foot raised, as we walk up. Then "Wh-i-rr," and, like a catharine-wheel, a covey of nine burst from the protecting cover, and with a chirrup of alarm fleet onwards. Our four barrels ring out, and four of the number, including the old cock, whom you have deftly stopped with your right barrel, are left behind. Down drop the dogs "to shot," and after three of the birds have been gathered, and a runner has afforded Sam, the retriever, some little fun, we proceed onwards. Varying luck attends our progress, as stubble, clover, rough ground, and roots are tried, and the bag swells by degrees.

Then as we near a gate opening into a lane, we see Mabel and Lilian, attired in all the charm

of jaunty sailor-hats, jackets, and coquettish tailor-made dresses, advancing towards us attended by Spot, the fox-terrier, while behind them a groom carries rugs and the luncheon-basket. A pleasant *al fresco* meal, topped up with just one glass of brown sherry, a smoke, and a pleasant half-hour's chat and flirtation (!)—not out of place on such a heavenly day; an ungallant, perhaps, but firm refusal to allow our fair friends to walk with the guns; and then John, "Willum," and Co. having done ample justice to their share of the "prog," we bid adieu to our charmers and once more take the field.

So the hours pass pleasantly: now a corn-crake flops out of some seed-clover, affording an easy shot; a hare or swift-scuttling bunny has its career cut short with a charge of shot; or a wood-pigeon, less wary than his comrades, gets slated and adds variety to the bag. Then, when the day is nearly over, Bess, backed by Shot, makes a lovely point at the edge of some turnips; and you wind up the day with a neat right and left on which you will ever congratulate yourself.

And now enough. Let us light our pipes and see what the bags contain, including what our lady friends have taken home in the pony-cart. Lay the birds out in pairs, carefully smooth down



"Bess makes a lovely point."

their lovely plumage, and let us count: fifteen and a half brace of partridges, two landrails, one wood-pigeon, five hares, eleven rabbits, and a marauding jay, whose blue wing-feathers will be useful for fly-dressing—a not unsatisfactory total of fifty-one head; well worked for and well walked for. Not such a bad day. May we never have a worse one on a First of September!

And now for the other side of the question,—“driving,” to wit.

The conventional idea connected with partridge-shooting is, that the keen sportsman is early afield and tramping the stubble and dew-drenched turnips in the wake of his trusty pointers, but the reality nowadays is often very different. No doubt in many places this *modus operandi* is still pursued; but in a great many more, and, in fact, on all large manors where big bags are made on “the First,” a far different method prevails. There, “driving,” or else “walking up,” the birds is resorted to, and though perhaps not such real enjoyment to some as shooting over dogs, yet it is by no means to be despised; for to make a bag of “driven” partridges calls for not only much woodcraft displayed by the person managing the drive, but also skill on the part of the shooters.

Granted that the pleasure of shooting over a brace of good dogs is the perfection of sport, and perhaps the most enjoyable, yet where birds are very thick it becomes almost a matter of impossibility to make the extraordinarily big bags over them that have been made in driving. Not that I am one of those who hold that quantity is the quintessence of sport, and that it can be measured by the number of slain; but where there is a large head of game to be killed, you *must* have plenty of guns.

Driving, too, as generally resorted to in the great game counties—such as Norfolk, &c.—is a decided boon to the rural population; for it gives employment to labour of all kinds, and causes money to circulate in the district. Ignorant or interested agitators may thunder diatribes against the injustice of the Game Laws, but it should be remembered by such individuals that the strongest evidence given in favour of their retention was that offered by the farmers themselves before a Select Committee of the House of Commons in 1873. When, too, it is taken into consideration what enormous bags have been made on well-preserved manors, it will be apparent that this amount of game could not possibly have been shot over dogs.

One instance will suffice. In 1885 the Maharajah Dhuleep Singh and his party bagged at Elvedon in fifteen days' shooting no fewer than 6516 partridges—the three biggest days' bags being respectively 307, 309, and 428 brace.

A few words explanatory of partridge-driving may not be here out of place, and then, with your permission, we will form units of a party of six guns where a good day's sport may be expected.

The guns are placed behind suitable cover: in some places this takes the form of thin "strips," planted specially for the purpose; in others a tall "bullfincher" conceals the sportsman; while in others, again, hurdles forming three sides of a square, and topped with gorse, are used as shelter, as the lay of the land dictates. The guns are placed at intervals of from sixty to eighty yards apart, and half a mile of ground is sufficient for a drive. In some instances this distance has to be exceeded, but it is as well not to do so; for the birds after being put up once are very apt, on being flushed the second time, to go back over the heads of the beaters in spite of the most frantic shouting and waving of flags. Fifteen to twenty beaters are generally considered suffi-

cient for a drive, though, of course, where a large extent of ground has to be covered, this number may be increased. These men are extended in line in a semicircle, the flanks being slightly in advance, and keeping well forward, so as to keep the birds from breaking away to one side.

And now we will suppose that we have all been placed in our respective stands, and that we are awaiting the turn of events. This may take some time in coming—say twenty minutes. This will give you time to look about you, see where the other guns are posted, calculate the chance of getting a shot on the other side of the ash-tree in front of you, see that you are well concealed, and make general preparations for the fray. Do not be nervous or anxious, for though the birds will be on and past you like a flash of lightning, as long as you take them coming *to you* your chances of success will be considerably increased. Above all, once birds begin to come, do not go looking to see what other guns to your right and left are doing. Attend to your own business, and leave others to look after theirs.

The first intimation you will have that the game has begun will be some excited blackbirds and

thrushes twittering and flustering about in the fence or strip in front of you. The next probably will be the sight of a hare sneaking through the fence and cantering out into the field. There she stops for a moment; then catching sight of several bipeds standing all in a row, she lays back her long ears and stretches away at her best pace, only to tumble head over heels forty yards off to a well-directed shot. But hark! The words, "M-a-a-rk, m-a-rk," long drawn out, come softly wafted on the September breeze; then a "chirrup," and, like bullets from a gun, eight brown objects top the fence in front of you.

"Well killed!" You dropped that bird neatly, but you were too late with your second barrel, and by the time your loader has shoved your second gun into your hands the birds are topping the fence into the next field. "Swish" comes a covey to your right, and your next-door neighbour, who is an adept at killing driven partridges, has a brace down as they come to him, and also a single bird with his second gun, before they are out of shot. "Bang! bang! bang!" and the fusilade goes on merrily all down the line; little puffs of smoke issuing from the guns, and a cloud of feathers floating in the air, show that the battle is still waging. A single bird—a wary old

"Frenchman," as red-legged partridges are called (and, by the way, these are always best for driving, as they go very straight when flushed)—comes high over the ash-tree, whose height you calculated before the drive began. A regular "rocketeer," it gives you infinite satisfaction to see him respond to your shot by doubling up his wings and descending with a thud that makes him rebound off the ground as he falls a hundred yards behind you. Then you see the drivers approaching, so fire no more to your front. Not that you will get many chances of doing so, but in case (as indeed sometimes happens, birds have run on to the very end) this should occur, reserve your fire till the birds are past you.

The slain having been collected, and having marked your card as so many "killed" and so many "gathered" (and we hope you will not exaggerate in this respect, as we have known some sportsmen do), you tell the keeper where any wounded or "towered" birds are, and move on to the next drive.

This and the next, and the next, which last is perhaps *the* drive of the day, and witnessed by the ladies who come out to join you at lunch, give you plenty of shooting, and we will hope successful shooting; for you will now have become

more accustomed to the sport, and, fired with a desire to emulate the gallant sportsman on your right, who has earned a world-renowned reputation as a "shot," you, too, manage more than once to "pull 'em down" from the skies.

Then lunch—that pleasant meal! No sandwich-and-flask business this; but a table spread in cool shade, with the whitest of tablecloths, flowers, silver, glass, all the delicacies of the season, and vintage of the best; graced, too, by the presence of pretty women, well dressed. An hour thus disposed of, and the inevitable cigarette smoked, you once more take the field, and the same game goes on; only the probabilities are that you will not make *quite* such good shooting after lunch as you did before. Still, when the bag comes to be added up at the end of the day, you will find that some one, at any rate, has "held straight"; for the total may be 103 brace of partridges, two landrail, thirty-five hares, ten rabbits, and five wood-pigeons, amounting in all to 258 head, which, after all, may be considered very satisfactory as the produce of six guns.

Whether or not our anticipations for the next 1st of September will be verified it is difficult to say. At any rate, may you and I, who pursue the plump little partridge—whether we shoot

him in a humble and old-fashioned way over dogs, whether we partake of the more lordly “drive,” or even “walk” him up—find him plentiful wherever we shoot, and may we all “hold straight,” particularly at an old cock bird.



An old cock bird.

CHAPTER IV.

A DAY ON THE OUTSIDES.

IN spite of October having earned the epithet of "chill," to the sportsman it is anything but a gloomy month. In fact it is very bright, and anything but chill and sombre. The falling leaves usher in to the lover of the gun a season of new joys, and touch a responsive chord in his heart as he sees them flutter down. On the 1st of October the whole category of birds and beasts of the chase may be pursued and slain legitimately. By then the woods and coppices have showered down their wealth of foliage, the brown and yellow tinted leaves begin to carpet the ground, and the bare branches of the trees to form a network against the sky.

Poets and painters may surround the mid-month of autumn with a halo of sadness which speaks of the dying year, but the sportsman's heart is pervaded with far different feelings. To him it brings in its train new delights, new avocations, and a thirst for those joys of the

chase which permeate with such fervency the minds of Diana's votaries. In hunting countries, by October the cubs have been well hustled and taught to fly at the sound of horn or hound, and have begun to learn that safety is more often ensured by instant flight than by a vacillating policy. The young entry, too, have had their appetites whetted, tasted the delicacy of fox-flesh, and been imbued with ardour for the chase; while horses are putting on muscle, and getting into condition for the harder work of regular hunting. In those parts of the country where the gun reigns supreme, grouse and partridges have developed into maturity, and are not only strong on the wing, but very different birds from what they were in August and September; and last, but not least, on the 1st of October it becomes legal to shoot the Colchian bird, which forms the *pièce de résistance* of so many shooting manors.

Few days in the shooter's calendar surpass this day—a day when a mixed bag is looked forward to; and though some weeks must elapse before the big “shoots” take place, when the lover of “rocketers” has his innings, yet even now he may find some wily, long-tailed old cock pheasant hid in the dewy leaves of a spinney or amid the tangled growth of a hedgerow, who will afford him a fair mark on which to exercise his skill.

Some, indeed, think that a pheasant is as easy to hit as a haystack, and that he should never be missed. He looks so big on the wing—and so easy to shoot. False assumption! Though he rises with a fuss and fluster that are sometimes trying to weak nerves, with the sun flashing on his prismatic-coloured plumage that makes him take the shape of a birdlike firework, yet these very facts make him deceptive, and to cut down an old cock pheasant handsomely requires an artist—for a duffer is hopelessly “out of it.”

The surroundings, too, of October sport, are inviting. The weather is neither too hot nor too cold. Morning frosts make the air exhilarating, and in the shade on the north side of the coverts and fences the leaves and grass-blades are often encrusted with a powdering of hoar-frost that speaks of approaching winter, while the pleasant musky odour of decaying leaves greets us as we pass through the woods, and our feet sink deep into the soft carpeting of moss and fallen foliage. The whole country has a quiet look, which betokens the coming end of the year, and the approach of the season dear to the sportsman's heart. Yes, take it all round, October is a most sporting month, and its first day by no means its worst.

Let us take a ramble together—you and I, and another—and go round the “outsides,” to

take toll of any pheasants that, attracted by the falling acorns, have strayed beyond the bounds of safety afforded by the home coverts. If you be not a stickler for big bags, take pleasure in the working of dogs, and are game for a good tramp, I think I can promise you (on paper *bien entendu*) a pleasant day, a mixed bag, and an appetite for dinner. We will take two brace of spaniels, a steady old pointer, a retriever, and half-a-dozen men and boys to beat, and, *if you please*, we will shoot no "hens," *unless they are going the wrong way*.

How delicious is the clear morning air, with the damp smell of the earth, where the hoar-frost has succumbed to the sun's bright rays, as we tell Shot, the pointer, to "hold up!" in a stubble-field! The old dog soon gets on birds, but they rise wild, and skim on over a grass-field, till we see them flap their wings and alight in some turnips beyond. Thither we follow them, getting *en route* a hare that springs from her form in a spot where something has gone wrong with the reaping-machine and left a thick patch of stubble. In the turnips we find the partridges we have marked in, besides others, and between us we account for four and a half brace—letting go three hen pheasants which fly towards the home coverts. A little patch of seed-clover furnishes a late-staying landrail and a brace more par-

tridges, and then, following a footpath, we make our way to the boundary hedge. A great hairy fence is this, surmounted by a thick growth of hazel where "the bramble and the brushwood struggle blindly o'er the bank," and tall oaks tell us we shall probably here find some errant pheasants.

One gun goes forward, the others taking either side of the fence, for we have a mutual understanding with our next-door neighbour; and then the spaniels, Fan and Rattle, are uncoupled and hop up into the fence, while a couple of boys tap the fence as we go. "Yap, yap, yap!" goes Fan, and out from a tangled tuft of fern and brier a "great gollaring, red-eyed" cock pheasant emerges with a prodigious flutter, and with a hop, skip, and jump launches forth. You give him law of course, but perhaps too much, for though you knock him over he proves an active pedestrian, and exhibits how much lead a cock pheasant can carry away on two legs, before Sam, the retriever, brings him back, holding him so gently that the bird's bright eyes are turned on us in wonder, until a beater taps him on the head with his ash stick, and sends him to that bourne from which no pheasant returneth. So the fence is beaten out, and many another. Now the side guns get chances, now the forward gun; while a few rabbits add variety to the bag

as we dawdle along and watch the little spaniels, with their ever-busy tails, bustling along the undergrowth and worming their way through an extra-thick patch of bramble and fern.

So we shoot our way till lunch-time, and eat our modest meal under a bank, while an unhung gate affords a seat secure from the damp ground ; and after just “twa draws” of a soothing pipe, we resume our sport. At last we reach a couple of little spinneys which lie contiguous to dangerous ground ; for the land adjoining belongs to one of that abominable class who use cider-cake, Indian corn, and damaged raisins to decoy our birds on to their ground, from whence they never return—so the fiat goes forth to “shoot everything.” A brief but pretty bit of sport we have here, for the little coverts are favourite spots for pheasants ; they come high too, rocketing over the tall trees, and the cries of “Cock (or Hen) over !” “Hare forward !” “Rabbit to the left !” come constantly from the beaters. So by the time the spinneys are beaten out we have a goodly show ; and as we note our last victim reposing on a bed of golden and olive tinted moss, with the sunlight slanting on his rich and varied-coloured plumage, glossy neck, and purple crest, we must fain acknowledge that, despite all his detractors, an old cock pheasant is a magnificent game bird.

But there are more hedgerows to be beaten, and so we go on, getting a few pheasants here, a few there; while an unwary wood-pigeon, intent on beech-mast, and a rabbit that springs from a tussock of rough grass and goes bobbing along showing his white scut, add variety to the bag. And now the shades of evening are drawing in. A slight misty fog rising all along the valley betokens the presence of a stream, and, intent on "mixing the bag," we turn our steps thither. Ah! here we are. Slowly and with an oily motion glides the current between reed and flag fringed banks, and Sam, the retriever, cocks his ears and looks anxiously at the water as a moor-hen rises and goes skittering along the surface, then, alighting with a splash, promptly dives. "Get in, old man!" and in Sam bounces, and is soon busy splashing about among the flags and reeds. "Quack, quack!" and up gets a brood of ducks. Six barrels ring out. You have a couple down, our friend one, while I drop one to my first barrel, and the second bird, hard hit, shivers up against the wind for a moment, then wobbles on, and finally falls with a crash into an osier-bed higher up the river.

On our way to gather him a couple of snipe rise from an oozy patch. Of these you and our friend each secure one, and then it is time to stop and count our bag. Here it is: thirty-three

pheasants, thirteen partridges, four hares, sixteen rabbits, five wild duck, one landrail, two snipe, one wood-pigeon; total, seventy-five head. So home. Are you satisfied? I know I am; and a day "on the outsides" is not half-bad fun. Is it, now? And you must take a brace of "long-tails" with you.



A brace of "long-tails."

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